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With glad farm home memories
Winfield Scott Sly

Chronicles of a Farm House

By

WINFIELD SCOTT SLY

Author of

“Anneeti, The Gypsy Artist”, “Biography of Babe”,
“El-Rasched”, etc.

A TRUE LIFE STORY

“A farmer’s life is the life for me,
I own I love it dearly;
Every season full of glee
I take its labor cheerily.”



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To the Memory
of
Two Honest Farmers,
MY PARENTS,
This Volume Is Lovingly
Dedicated by the
Author

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FOREWORD

As a number of gems are strung together and fastened with a clasp, so "Chronicles of a Farm House" is a collection of *facts* that have occurred in the Author's experience and knowledge, and are here united on a thread of fiction.

Rosamond, the central figure, around which many incidents center, is introduced to the reader, to illustrate the stirring events that are occurring in many an obscure home, as well as to inspire hope and enduring fidelity in those who may be suffering trials, or living under a cloud, such as shadowed her own young life, until the silver lining shined through.

So dependent are people in city and country on each other as producers and consumers, it is well for each class to understand its relations to the other.

In the quiet life of the farm homes are being developed those sterling qualities of body, mind and morals that are too largely lacking in city life, and which are to chiefly shape the social, religious, commercial and political destinies of the nation.

Covering, as the story does, the closing years of American slavery and the Civil War; the growth of Woman's Suffrage sentiment, and the development of the Temperance Reform and National Prohibition, these subjects enter largely into the personal narratives presented.

Attempt at literary style has been unsought in the earnest desire to present a simple narrative that will interest the young and edify also those of riper years.

If each reader's heart and home, in city or country, shall be made better and brighter by the perusal of these pages, I shall remember with pleasure the labor of their preparation.

W. S. S.

Lansing, Mich.

CHRONICLES OF A FARM HOUSE

Chapter I

HOME

On one of the avenues leading off from the main street in Lockwood, far enough away to avoid the noise and bustle of the town, stood a cozy, red house.

Built in the center of a large yard and surrounded with trees, it made a pretty picture.

The house itself was a low framed, old fashioned one, that had been built for many years.

It had no porch; only one broad stone step led up to the weather beaten door. Thin, tiny panes of glass, filled the windows and were covered with vines that reached to the overhanging eaves.

Near the Southwest corner of the house stood a mammoth locust tree, which was covered each year with a profusion of snowy blossoms, whose fragrant sweetness attracted the bees from their hives near the garden fence.

To the large apple tree near by was tied the swing—the swing with its broad board seat that afforded a tempting opportunity to swing, even to the branches of the tree itself.

Near the back of the house, covering the deep dug well, stood the well curb, with its windlass and long chain, attached to the

“Old oaken bucket,
The iron bound bucket,
The moss covered bucket,
That hung in the well”.

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Near by was the kitchen door, from which often issued such tempting odors of baking tarts and pies, and more wholesome food.

A long stretch of grassy lawn from the rear of the house to the garden fence offered the children a fine place for a race or a game of tag.

The garden itself was a thing of beauty, with its paths bordered with flowers from Spring until Autumn. From its shapely, well kept beds were gathered ample supplies of berries and vegetables.

Still beyond lay the fields and meadows, through which a rippling little brook wound its way.

In such a home, before which passed the daily stage from Chicago to Juliet, lived for a time Sanford Seely and his family.

Two years before, he and his wife and three children—Edward, Rosamond and Rosalie—came from the East. After paying their fares to Juliet, Mr. Seely had only sufficient money to buy a small stock of provisions and an axe with which—after having moved his family into a small log house a few miles from town—he began to cut the heavy timber near by, to supply the canal boats with fuel, as they passed up and down the canal.

The next Spring the red house with its small farm was rented.

Not until more than a year old was Rosalie named; then, because her plump, rosy cheeks resembled so much the June roses in full bloom before the dining room window, her brother Edward wished her named Rosebud. His mother replied that “rosebuds do not always remain buds, and she would not always remain a little girl,” so she proposed the name—Rosalie.

Her sister Rosamond—then four years old—who was playing in the room—came and put her arms around the baby’s neck; she kissed her again and again; then relaxing her embrace she stepped back a short distance and looked at her in profound silence.

“Why, Mother!” she exclaimed with a childish laugh, “I am going to call her ‘Rosa,’ so you can have two ‘Rosas’ all the time.”

“Yes, and they are both very sweet and pretty,” said Mrs.

Home

Seely, as she left the children to amuse each other while she went about her household duties.

By industry and economy, Mr. Seely succeeded in accumulating several hundred dollars, besides what rent and the care of his family required.

In the meantime, two sons were born; the eldest Walter, the other Martin; so that the increase of her family cares required Mrs. Seely's full time and strength. Rosamond—now a dark-haired, gentle girl of twelve years—gave much thoughtful attention to the younger children, besides rendering—when not attending school in Lockwood with her older brother Edward—much assistance to her mother in other ways. Rosalie was not to continue long with them, for when the youngest brother was two years old a fever soon burned away her strength and after many days of patient suffering she fell asleep, to—

“Awake,

In the dawning of the morning.”

The final service was held in a church in Lockwood, where she had occasionally attended Sabbath services with her mother, who, wearied with the week day's family cares, as was Mr. Seely with his toil and close attention to business, attended no place of public worship regularly; and yet, while not professing to be religious nor members of any church, they were known and esteemed by all for their strict morality. They practiced in their daily life the virtues they instilled into the minds of their children—truthfulness, honesty, industry and in a kindly manner exacted from each child a strict obedience. At the funeral of Rosalie, the younger boys entered a church for the first time.

To Walter, especially, was it an exciting experience; never had he been in so large a building, except the barn at home; he gazed at the ceiling and over the pews filled with people, and up into the gallery where the singers were seated.

When his curiosity was, in a measure, satisfied with these and his wonder, at the crowd of people assembled somewhat abated, he looked at the white-haired minister standing in the high pulpit.

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While he could not understand what was being said, still he felt impressed by his earnest manner. As he saw the tears coursing down the minister's cheeks, he said to himself, "that man feels sorry too, because Rosalie has died."

As he sat and looked at and listened to the minister, filled more and more with wonder, a voice seemed to whisper to him, as if in his very heart, "little boy, that is what you will do when you become a man."

The sun was sinking low as the family returned from the cemetery.

While the children seemed to realize but feebly the sorrow death had brought to their home, and Mr. Seely was borne up, and maintained a calm reserve in expressing the deep feelings of his heart, not so his wife; for, in the death of Rosalie, she had sustained the loss of a companionship that was growing more efficient and sweet each year.

As time passed, something each day would remind Mrs. Seely of the absent one; her heart would melt and the blinding tears would fall; at this the younger children wondered and Rosamond would act the part of a comforter and endeavor to soothe her mother's aching heart and dry her tears. "Mother," she tenderly asked, "has not Rosalie gone to live with the angels, and will she not be happy there?"

"Yes, darling," she replied, "but mother is sad because she has only one Rosa now."

As she pressed the child to her heart, she seemed to feel her love grow deeper and broader for this, her only daughter, and she impressed a mother's kisses again and again upon her cheek.

"Mother," said Rosamond excitedly after such a caressing, "what makes your face and hands so hot? They almost burn my cheek."

"I do not know, my child," was the reply, "only that I feel very weary; but I must hasten and prepare supper for your father will soon be home from his work."

She went about with languid steps; just as the evening meal was ready Mr. Seely came. No sooner had he entered the door

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and seen the flushed cheeks of his wife than he exclaimed, with alarm, "Are you sick? You look as if you have a fever."

Taking her hand, he led her to the couch. After he and the children had eaten supper he went, without delay, to Lockwood for the physician.

In an hour they returned together. While the physician examined Mrs. Seely's condition her husband put the younger children in bed; coming into the room he looked anxiously at his wife, then turning to the table, where the doctor was engaged in doing up some medicine in small papers, said:

"Doctor, what do you think is the matter with my wife?"

"Well," he answered, after some hesitation and in an undertone, "I fear she is threatened with a fever such as your little daughter had; but we must break it up, if possible. Give these powders every two hours, and I will call early in the morning."

It proved as he feared, and so deeply seated was the fever that only by the most skillful treatment and careful nursing was life preserved; but not until the long winter had passed and the early spring—with its balmy air, its singing birds and opening bloom—had come, was Mrs. Seely able again to take charge of the interests of her family; then she began to realize how loving and helpful Rosamond had become; during her mother's sickness she had been like a little mother to the younger children.

Having accumulated sufficient money, Mr. Seely decided to buy a small tract of land and build a home of their own.

The labor of clearing timbered land was so great he decided not to repeat the toilsome experience of his father and his own boyhood in the virgin forests of the East. He decided, therefore, to seek a home on the "rolling prairies," where each child could be located on a farm near him when they were grown.

He was offered a tract, fully within his ability to purchase, lying between his present home and Juliet, on which were extensive deposits of stone, that lay in strata varying from a few inches to many feet in thickness; but the newness of the country led him to think it would be so many years before there would be any demand for the stone that he declined the offer—little thinking that before his youngest boy would be of age, a railroad

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would be built through it, and a great state institution be located on the land, the inmates of which—together with private parties and rich corporations—would be engaged in quarrying the stone and shipping millions of dollars worth, by railroad or canal, to the rapidly growing cities of Chicago and Juliet, besides filling orders from distant places where the fame of the stone had gone.

Passing westward a couple of miles upon the broad prairies, that lay like a beautiful lawn, decked with flowers—which could be plainly seen from the front door of the red house where he was living—he decided to purchase a larger tract there and for less money than he could have done where timber or stone was found.

There, having built a plain and comfortable farm house, he moved his family.

It seemed an inspiring omen, as they alighted at the door of their new home, that the birds sang so sweetly and the busy bees hummed about from flower to flower, which were strewn in rare profusion up to the very doors and far away to the north and west, while the bright May morning sun cast a sheen of glory over all.

A new life seemed to course through Mrs. Seeley's veins; a new light shone in her eyes and a tone of gladness was in her voice as she, assisted by Rosamond, busily engaged in adjusting furniture, dishes, pictures and books.

The younger boys gathered huge bouquets of wild flowers, and chased the many colored butterflies here and there, while Edward went with his father, who began to turn over the prairie sod—in long, black, ribbon-like furrows—with team and plow. When the field was plowed it resembled a plaited sheet in black. Then Mr. Seely and Edward, each with a dull axe, walked the length of the field on an upturned sod and every few feet would strike his axe into it; after dropping a few grains of corn, with an occasional squash or melon or pumpkin seed, into the gashes, they would press the openings together with their heels; thus the whole field was planted in rows a yard or more apart.



VIEW OF THE FARM HOUSE

(See Page 12)

Home

When the corn was nearly ripe and the pumpkins, melons and squashes had been gathered, winter wheat was sown broadcast and covered by running a harrow between the rows of corn. In one season the soil was thus subdued, three crops planted and two gathered from it, with another maturing, which seemed to Mr. Seely a great saving in labor, as compared with clearing stoney or timbered land.

CHAPTER II.

PROSPERITY.

Mr. Seely believed that much is made by *saving* as well as by *making*; he felt the need of barns and sheds to protect machinery from exposure when not in use, as well as for storing grain and sheltering his horses and cattle; therefore, as soon as his corn was planted, he began to collect and prepare material to construct a barn and fence the planted fields.

As the prairie soil needed little or no working the first year, he had ample time to cut what wild grass his stock would require for hay, besides considerable quantities for merchants and others who kept horses or cows in Juliet and Lockwood. As the first cost of the grass was nothing, the sales of hay paid handsome returns for the labor expended in cutting it, although done by hand with the old fashioned scythe—there being no reaper or mower in the neighborhood.

Having stacked the hay in the open field, ready to be drawn to town when the work for Summer and Autumn was over on the farm, Mr. Seely engaged carpenters to assist him—he being a good mechanic himself—and the timbers were soon framed and the barn ready for “raising.”

Invitations were sent to the farmers scattered here and there over the prairies to come with their sons and hired men to assist according to the custom when a barn was to be built.

Mrs. Seely was very busy for several days—assisted by Rosamond and the boys—cooking doughnuts and pies made from pumpkins that had lain like mammoth oranges scattered through the cornfield.

The evening before the appointed day, Mr. Seely arose from the supper table and said: “I must drive over to Lockwood

Prosperity

and procure some nails and other articles necessary in handling and fastening the barn timbers in place."

Turning to Edward he said, "My son, you can go with me if you wish."

When they had hitched the team to the "democrat," as the light wagon was called, they drove to the gate; by his father's instruction, Edward ran bounding up the path that led to the house and called to his mother to hand him the black jug with the cob cork in it.

"Why, Edward!" said Mrs. Seely, "tell your father we do not need any molasses or vinegar, as we have plenty in the house."

He went out, but returned to the door, which Mrs. Seely opened just as her husband said to him, "I want it for another purpose."

"If you get oil in it, Mr. Seely," she asked, "what will we use to carry milk to Aunt Carrie?"

"I don't wish to get oil," he answered. "You know, Sarah, the neighbor's will be disappointed and provoked if I do not provide a good supply of rum or whiskey, for everybody does it."

"But, Sanford," asked Mrs. Seely, "don't you think a good dinner and plenty of tea and coffee, with a lunch in the forenoon, will satisfy them? Somehow, I feel afraid to have you offer them whiskey, for John Giddings and Mart Eldred always drink too much and are quarrelsome when under its influence; I am afraid they will hurt someone; I don't think the rest will blame you for not getting it."

"Well, I would rather not get it," said Mr. Seely, "but we have just come into the neighborhood and I want to be on good terms with the farmers; if I see anyone drinking too much I will take the jug away."

Mrs. Seely went reluctantly to the pantry and brought out the old black jug they had purchased and filled with molasses when they began housekeeping. As she handed it to Edward she said to him, softly: "You must keep close to your father, my son, when he goes to get the jug filled, so you will not get hurt by anybody."

Chronicles of a Farm House

"I will," Edward replied; hastening to the wagon he climbed in; he and his father were soon out of sight and sound. Mrs. Seely sighed deeply as she closed the door and resumed her work.

After the supper dishes were cleared away and the smaller children were in bed, she and Rosamond sat down together with their sewing. Both were silent for some time, then Rosamond spoke and said, "What is father going to get in the black jug?" but as Mrs. Seely hesitated to answer her, she continued, "you told Edward to tell him we have everything we need, and the baking is all done for tomorrow."

"He is going to get whiskey for the men to drink tomorrow," her mother replied at last.

"Why!" said Rosamond, "I should think the men would not dare to drink it, as they are going to work so high and walk on such narrow boards and timbers!"

"Oh, I am afraid some of them will fall and be killed or injured!"

"If John Giddings comes he will surely get drunk; you know he does every time he goes to town; how he drives when he goes home; it seems as if he would fall out of his buggy; and how he talks!"

"Why, it fairly frightens me when I see or hear him. I feel so sorry for his wife and little Reta; how sad they must feel when he comes home in that condition!"

"Uncle Joel, Aunt Carrie and my cousins will be here; Uncle Joel will drink, too; you know how cross he is to them when he has been drinking."

"I am so glad father does not get drunk!"

"I do wish he would not get anything for the men to drink."

It was quite late when Mr. Seely and Edward returned; when they entered the house Rosamond noticed that her father seemed very thoughtful and her brother was very much excited.

When she and Edward went to their rooms for the night they stopped at the head of the stairs and Edward said, "I tell you, Rosamond, I was awfully scared tonight!"

"What was it?" his sister inquired, eagerly.

"Well, I don't know what made him do it, but when father

Prosperity

got the jug filled at the tavern, in a room where there were lots of bottles and barrels, and several tables at which some men were drinking and talking very loudly, one of the men hit another with his fist, then threw his tumbler at him, striking him on the forehead, cutting him awfully; the man fell flat on the floor.

“Father and Mr. Gray—who owns the tavern—picked the man up and laid him on a bench.

“A young man, who seemed to be a clerk in the tavern, took the tumblers from the table where the men had been drinking.

“In a few minutes a doctor came and pretty soon a woman opened the door and hurried over to the bench where the man was lying. As soon as she saw his face, she began crying; she asked the doctor if he would die.”

“What did the doctor say?” asked Rosamond with deep anxiety.

“Oh,” said Edward, “he told her ‘no; that he was only stunned; he would get over it, although the wound was a bad one;’ he told her ‘not to be alarmed, but go home and as soon as her husband came to himself they would bring him home.’”

“Oh,” said Rosamond, as the tears filled her eyes, “was the woman his wife? Have they any children? Did the woman go home when the doctor told her to?”

“No,” said Edward, “she told him she would wait and help take him home; several other men came in; as it was getting late, father said we would have to come home.”

Bright and early the next morning Mr. Seely’s family was astir—the children all up in time for breakfast, filled with excited expectation. When nearly through breakfast Rosamond glanced toward Edward and said, “I wonder how that man is this morning?”

“What man?” asked Walter.

“You tell him, Edward,” said Rosamond, and the incident was rehearsed in all its details.

“Who was the man that was injured?” Mrs. Seely inquired of her husband.

“I do not know,” he replied, “but I think the man who struck

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him was from Juliet; he left the room in the confusion and I did not see him again.

“If I had not had my jug filled before the affair occurred I would not have bought any liquor for today; I heartily wish there was not a drop of the wretched stuff made; as long as it is made men will drink it; some don’t seem to know when they have had enough.”

Breakfast was soon over. By ten o’clock a large number of men had arrived and were soon engaged in putting the barn frame together.

Everyone was in good humor. The sills were quickly laid and pinned together, after which the corner posts were set and stayed. Cross pieces and plates were adjusted; just as the bell was rung for dinner the men were ready to begin putting on the roof frame to receive the rafters.

Those men who had worked on the ground laid their tools down; the men on the frame came down the ladders set for them, except that some, more agile than the others, threw their arms and legs around the corner posts and slid to the ground.

John Giddings, who was very quick and strong when sober, had been working up on the frame, running along on the plates as nimble as a squirrel; he was assisted by two others who were sure-footed, cool-headed young fellows.

“Well, Mr. Seely,” said John as he sprang to the ground, when five or six feet from the bottom of the ladder, “how does the job suit you so far? Don’t you think we are a pretty lively lot of fellows out here on the prairies?”

“Yes,” said Mr. Seely, “I never saw a barn frame put together quicker, and no mistake or accident has occurred; now we will get ready for dinner.”

He was about to lead the way to the house—congratulating himself that no one had called for stimulants to drink—when Mart Eldred—a short, thick-set young fellow—said, “Ain’t you going to let us have something to give us an appetite, Mr. Seely?”

“Tut, tut, Mart,” said Mr. Seely, pleasantly, “hasn’t your

Prosperity

long ride this morning and the forenoon's work made you hungry enough to enjoy your dinner?"

Laughing, he started toward the house, hoping the men would not insist on having anything to drink. He very soon discovered John Giddings, Mart Eldred and several others were not following.

"It won't do, Mr. Seely," said an elderly man to him; "it is the custom here; we all did it, who have had 'barn raisings;' the men will be angry and leave without even getting their dinner; you will need everyone of them this afternoon."

Seeing "custom was law" in the neighborhood, Mr. Seely called to a young man—whose red, curly hair made him a marked figure—"James, you will find a black jug in the granary behind a large box; bring it to the house and let the boys help themselves. Walter," he called to one of his boys, "run to the house and bring some tumblers, spoons, and a bowl of sugar."

Taking the jug to the well, James called to the men to come and get their "appetizer."

With a shout, fifteen or twenty of them came running after him; taking the tumblers from Walter they poured liquor into them from the jug. Some drank it down just as it was; some put sugar in it and filled the tumbler with water and drank it.

Mart Eldred and John Giddings were among the number who drank theirs clear, and each took two or three glasses apiece before they quit and went to dinner.

Walter looked at the men as they drank; they seemed to like it so well he made up his mind he would try some when they were gone, but just then his mother called him to come and help her and Rosamond, so he failed to get a taste of the coveted beverage. After dinner some of the men helped themselves again and continued to do so at intervals during the afternoon until none was left in the jug.

The men who drank were all more noisy and less attentive to their work than in the morning. Several times Mr. Seely had to have some changes made because they had not noticed the parts that were marked to go together. One of the men, unable to steady himself, while holding the end of a large stick

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of timber, dropped it and just saved himself from falling; the stick went crashing through the frame work to the ground, barely missing the old gentleman who counselled Mr. Seely to let the men have whiskey; it landed on Mart Eldred's left foot, injuring it so badly that a doctor had to be sent for; he was so under the influence of what he drank that he did not sense much pain; after the doctor dressed his foot he was taken home and for many months could not walk.

Some of the men needed on the frame could not work there, so dizzy were they from drink, hence, when a heavy shower came up late in the afternoon, Mr. Seely was glad of an excuse to stop the work, because the men were becoming too stupid to do as they were told. Two of them began to quarrel and fight, cutting and bruising each other badly.

The carpenters came the next day to help complete the work, when Mr. Seely said to them, "If I had it to do over again, I would not furnish nor allow whiskey to be used by the men if the barn was never raised."

After the men had gone to their homes that evening, while Mr. Seely and the hired man were milking, Mrs. Seely and her children, together with Aunt Carrie and her girls, were seated at the supper table. During their conversation Rosamond took occasion to tell what Edward had seen the night before. His aunt appeared very sad.

"I tell you, Aunt Carrie," said Rosamond, as her cheeks flushed and her eyes sparkled with excited indignation, "if I ever get married and my husband goes to such places and drinks whiskey and gets hurt, I won't go near him."

"Well," said her aunt, with a sigh, "I hope you may never have occasion to test your determination, for I think it will not be as strong as it is now."

Rosamond did not realize how much her aunt's life was being filled with sadness, because her husband frequented such places and treated her harshly after returning home under the influence of strong drink.

CHAPTER III.

A BAD CUSTOM RENOUNCED.

The barn was completed in time for winter.

Mr. Seely and his wife and Rosamond went away for a visit; they left the three boys and the hired man—a jolly young Irishman named—John Magorrah, to care for things.

John was very fond of “grog,” as he called alcoholic stimulants. Evenings he would put the tea kettle on the stove; then, bringing a bottle from his trunk, would make himself a bowl of “sling;” each of the boys was treated to a cupful—with the injunction not to tell their parents; while they sipped their beverage, John would sing Irish songs, in a style so musical and racy, the boys were delighted; especially did they enjoy his singing the chorus,

“Little brown jug, shure I love thee;
Little brown jug, grom-o-ra-gre.”

The boys began to like the taste of the drink very much; some nights they would feel so “happy,” they would join John in his singing.

The weather was growing very cold; snowdrifts forming in the roads, made it difficult for teams to pass.

Edward was awakened one very cold night by hearing someone calling piteously for help.

Hastily dressing, he went to the door and found an old man nearly frozen, and so intoxicated he could hardly stand; he did not now know where he was.

Helping him into the house, Edward built a fire and called John; while they were putting the man’s horses in the barn the drunken man laid down upon the floor before the stove and soon fell asleep; he snored so loudly that Walter could not sleep; he got up and dressed then sat down by the stove.

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A spark of fire snapped out and fell on the old man's hand. He groaned deeply but did not wake up; Walter was glad, for he felt afraid to be alone with a drunken man.

In the morning John learned the name of the strange guest; he found he was one of his own countrymen who lived only a few miles away; having harnessed and hitched his horses to his wagon John took him to his home refreshed by his sleep and nourished by the breakfast and hot coffee Edward had prepared for him.

Walter told his mother and Rosamond about the old man when they returned home, and asked them what affected the poor man so badly. Mrs. Seely told him it was the same thing that caused the men to quarrel at the tavern.

"Yes," said Rosamond, "and it was that which father got for the men at the 'raising,' that made some who drank it fight and stagger about and fall down."

"Very true," said her mother; "I hope, Walter, you will never touch or taste it."

He then remembered that the smell of the "sling" John gave him was just the same as that which the men drank from the jug at the well; he began to know why John did not want him or Edward to tell their parents about the "grog" he gave them. He soon saw further effects of strong drink.

An old farmer living West of his father's farm was passing, on a high load of wood; he stopped and descended to the ground to help a passing teamster who had turned from the road in front of Mr. Seely's gate to repair a broken wagon; climbing to his place upon his load he lost his balance and pitched head-foremost, striking his head upon the frozen ground. Mr. Seely and Walter, who were splitting and piling wood in their yard, saw the accident and ran to help the teamster lift up the fallen man. He lay perfectly still; Walter thought he was dead, and nearly fainted, he was so frightened. The man regained his senses in a little while, then, a neighbor passing, helped them seat him on his load and went home with him.

"What made the man fall off his load, father?" asked Walter, when they returned to their work.

A Bad Custom Renounced

“He had been drinking too much,” said Mr. Seely.

“Drinking too much what?” Walter inquired.

“I don’t know,” his father replied, “but I suppose it was whiskey; that makes men drunk.”

“Well, I don’t ever want to get drunk,” said Walter, “and take such a bump on my head as that man did.”

“I hope you never will, my son!” his father replied,

The winter passed and the beautiful Spring returned once more.

Mr. Seely and his family celebrated their first anniversary in their new home. It had been a prosperous year. Mrs. Seely had entirely regained her health and strength. Rosamond had become so helpful and willing that the work was greatly lightened for her mother.

The boys were full of animation; they took great delight in planting seeds of different kinds in parcels of ground their father had assigned them for gardens.

Martin—who had taken his mother’s card of buttons to the garden when he was quite small and planted them, let his secret out, when he asked Walter “why the buttons did not grow?”—had learned the nature and origin of things—what and how to plant.

More of the prairie soil was plowed, one of the younger boys walking beside the oxen, occasionally touching them with the long ox whip, while Mr. Seely or Edward held the plow handles.

More corn was planted on the sod, as had been done the year before.

By July, the wheat that had been sown among the corn the previous Autumn was ripe enough to harvest.

Mr. Seely made inquiries for help which was readily found. The men, in addition to their wages, board and lodgings, demanded from a pint to a quart of whiskey per day, for each.

Mr. Seely—having seen so much quarreling among harvesters and so many terrible accidents where they had whiskey to drink—and that was almost everywhere that harvesting was done—indeed he had followed the custom and furnished it himself

Chronicles of a Farm House

when living in the red house—firmly resolved he would not furnish it now, nor hire a man who used it.

The conduct of the men at the raising of his barn made him still more decided. The men whom he had engaged refused to work when they learned whiskey would not be furnished; therefore Mr. Seely, Edward and John—the hired man—began the harvest alone. As they had no reaper, Mr. Seely cut the grain—laying it in even swaths—with an old fashioned cradle; John raked and bound it into bundles or sheaves, which Edward carried and “shocked up” in long rows.

The excessive heat and hard work prostrated Mr. Seely during the second day; he was confined to his bed with sickness.

To lose his crop of wheat would be a heavy loss; so, when John asked him if he should get some help, even if he had to furnish them liquor, he finally consented.

John hailed four men who were passing along the road looking for work. One of them, who seemed to be a leader—a very intelligent man, but whose face was very red and his nose badly blotched—said: “We will work for going wages, board and lodgings, with what whiskey we want.”

John told Mr. Seely and they were engaged. When dinner time came the men were informed there was no whiskey in the house, but some would be procured that night.

The men were suspicious they were going to be cheated out of stimulants and began to talk angrily. John told Walter he had some and they could have that. Mr. Seely was so informed and sent word to John to let the men have it, and he should be repaid for it—although he was very much surprised when he learned John kept a bottle of whiskey in his trunk. The men took their drinks in the woodshed, leaving the bottle and tumblers on a shelf when they went in to dinner.

Walter, who had been out in the garden, came into the woodshed; he smelled the odor; looking about, he saw the bottle, the same John had taken from his trunk, with the contents of which he had made the “sling” for the boys and himself the previous winter.

Seeing the tumbler, with a small quantity of sugar and whis-

A Bad Custom Renounced

key in the bottom, he hastily drank it; although it made his mouth and throat smart for a moment he liked it and was about to take down the bottle, but was afraid he might break it or spill the contents; turning away he entered the kitchen where his mother and Rosamond were cutting pies to be carried to the table.

As he came near her, Mrs. Seely suddenly laid down her knife; putting her hand upon his shoulder, she asked, in a troubled tone, "Walter, what have you been doing?"

"I have been working in the garden," he replied evasively; "the peas are all hoed and the onions are half weeded; I am awfully hungry and my back aches."

"I mean, what have you been drinking?" his mother asked; "I smell your breath."

Walter colored deeply, but looking her in the face, he said, "Why, I just took the sugar out of the tumbler on the shelf in the woodshed; that won't make me drunk."

"No, that will not," she said, "but, little by little, the taste is formed; after a while you will want more and more; then you will get drunk and do just as others do in the same condition."

Walter felt sorry his mother had smelled his breath, for he saw she was very sad about it; he did not dare to tell her how he did like that which he drank from the tumbler, nor how anxious he was to take more from the bottle.

His father, calling from his sick room, asked him for a drink of water; when Walter handed it to him, raising his head from the pillow, he was about to drink, but suddenly stopped. Turning toward him, his father gazed steadily at him for a moment, then, without saying a word, he drank a little of the water, as though it caused him pain to swallow it, then handing Walter the tumbler he dropped his head upon the pillow. That afternoon Rosamond overheard her father and mother engaged in an earnest conversation in the bedroom; although her father was very feeble, at times his voice could be heard plainly saying: "Well, Sarah, this is the last time. I will let the grain rot in the field before I will allow it again; I will discharge John if he drinks or brings liquor onto the premises."

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"It would be much better," replied Mrs. Seely, "for if our boys form a taste for it, we cannot tell where it will end, if it is where they can get it."

"I should not have had any this year," said Mr. Seely, "if I had not taken sick, but it seemed impossible to get my wheat cut any other way; this must be the last time."

As soon as Mr. Seely was able to walk about, he gave directions so that Edward and John, aided by a couple of neighbors, although with great difficulty and extra work—owing to the careless manner the sheaves were bound by the half intoxicated harvesters—were able to stack the wheat ready for threshing.

During the autumn and winter Mr. Seely talked with some of his neighbors about the matter; some who had boys agreed they would have no more whiskey used in their hay fields nor in harvesting; if they could not hire help they would combine and help each other. That they did from year to year until men were willing to work for regular wages without intoxicating drinks being supplied.

John, having learned from the boys that Mr. Seely would not allow him to have liquor on the place any more, was very shy about getting it or letting it be known; he liked to work for Mr. Seely and did not wish to lose his place.

The boys were playing in the corn crib one day however—one holding the old cat, while the other threw aside the corn among which the mice were hiding; when they ran out the old cat would spring and catch them, sometimes having two in her mouth and one under each paw, while her eyes were rolling wildly at those escaping through the holes in the crib.

The boys were enjoying the fun, as was the cat. They were becoming greatly excited when they discovered something black and shiny underneath the corn; quickly uncovering it they found a large jug.

They tried to take out the cork, but could not. They knew by the odor it contained whiskey; by the sound and weight as they tried to take it up and shake it they knew the jug must be nearly full.

"Whose is it?" asked Martin.

A Bad Custom Renounced

"It is John's," Walter replied; "if father knows he has it he will send him away; if John don't drink it he won't get drunk; so let us hide it where John can't find it."

Taking the jug from the crib, they managed to carry it to the workshop; putting it under a bench they covered it with shavings.

They promised each other they would never, "nev-er, n-e-v-e-r tell anybody". It was a great secret; very frequently during the afternoon and evening, with sundry private conversations, and many whisperings in the corners of the room, they charged each other not to tell. These confidential interviews, although unheard were not unseen by the family.

Rosamond and their mother frequently asked them what mischief they were hatching up? Their only answer would be a wise and knowing look at each other, which was not unobserved by John. After eating his supper, he went out and finished his chores at the barn; returning when it was quite dark, he sat down by the kitchen fire, looking very dejected; he said nothing, however, that evening, but went to bed earlier than usual.

When he went to the crib to get corn for the horses and pigs he evidently saw that someone had scattered it about and he also missed his jug. The next day he asked the boys who had been moving the corn? They feared at once they were found out, but Martin said:

"We did it; we were catching mice; we got lots of them, but some got away; Brownie couldn't catch them fast enough; if we had kept all her kittens they would be big enough to catch mice now."

They were about to run away for fear John would ask them more questions about the corn and the secret would leak out; he held up two shining pieces of silver coin and said: "Come here, b'ys, an' o'il gev yees these if yees'll tell me, did yees foind anything ilse in the carn besoides the moice?"

Martin was about to tell him—for money was so rare an article of possession he could hardly resist the desire to get it by telling.

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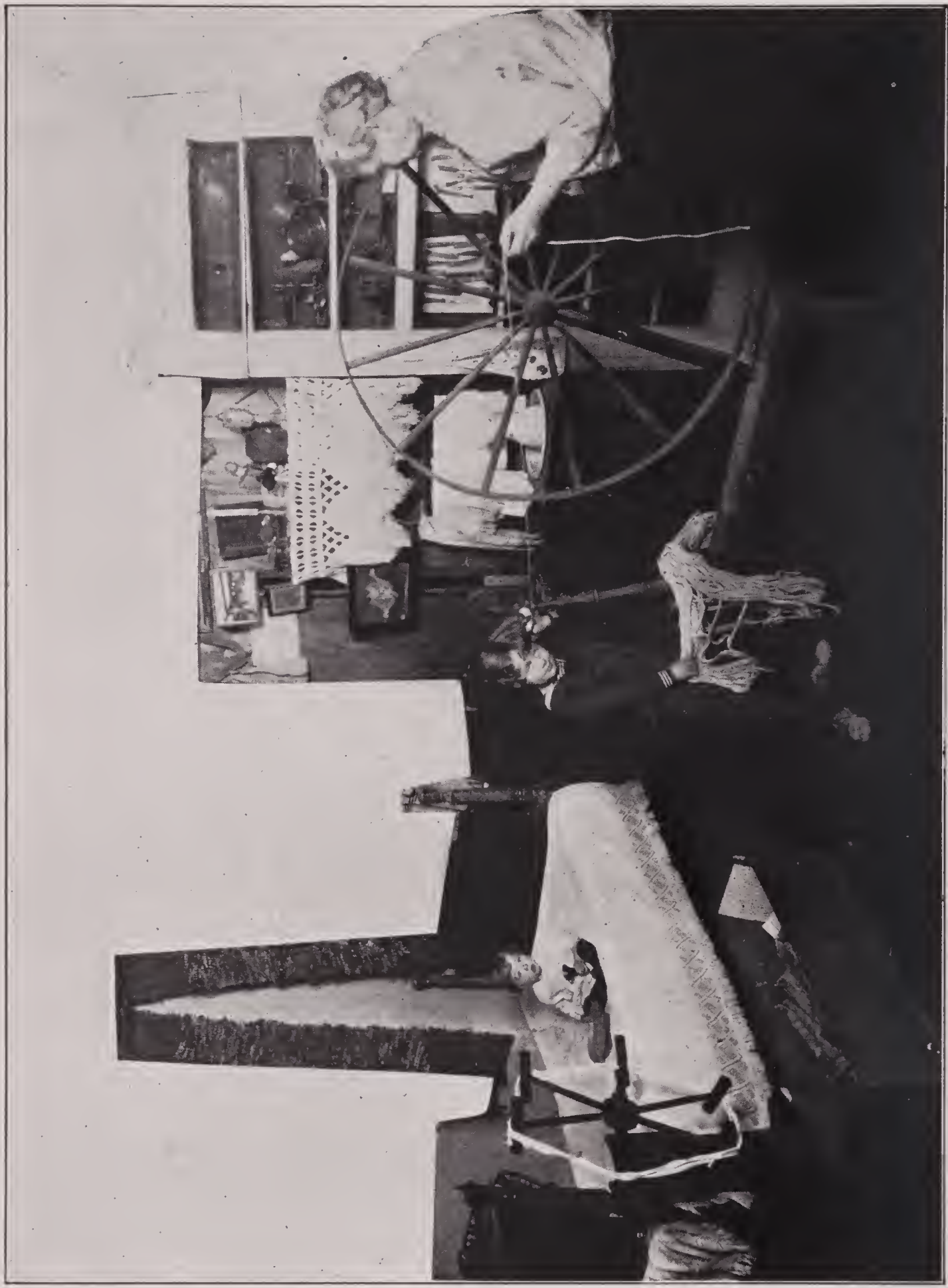
“Keep still, Martin!” said Walter; “don’t you tell; you know father said he would not have anything on the farm that would make men drunk.”

John was quite startled at the remark; he plainly saw, however, the boys had found his jug. With true Irish wit, he resorted to a bit of flattery, saying, “Mishter Saly is a gintleman ivery day in the wake, an’ yees are foin b’ys; shure, Rosamond is as swate a gurril as ony in the ould counthry; may the saints presarve us,” he added, crossing himself, “an’ oi’ll niver dhrink anither dhrop but pfwaht’s in the jug.”

The boys were very much impressed by John’s solemn manner and the promise he had made; yielding to his flattery and pleading—they both promised him they would not tell their father—then led the way to the hidden jug.

John gave a broad grin as he lifted it out of the shavings; handing the boys the money—a piece to each—he took a long drink; “but that’s foin!” he exclaimed, as the boys ran away to play; the jug was hidden again in a new and safer place by him.

Mr. Seely’s firm adherence to his purpose ceased to be an occasion of remark or censure by most of his neighbors. He had no difficulty in getting his work done. He enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing he was putting no temptation in the way of his boys that would lead to intemperate habits; no fear entered his mind of sorrow ever coming to him or his home on account of strong drink.



THE OLD FASHIONED SPINNING WHEEL
(See Page 29)

CHAPTER IV.

A SOCIAL PARTY.

When Mr. Seely moved his family to their new home many of the rooms were occupied in an unfinished condition, notably so the parlor and the chamber where the boys and hired man slept.

The winter months, before their completion, were occasions of frigid experiences; the driving blasts often forced the snow through each crack and crevice between the siding, sifting it in a snowy sheet over the bed where Walter and Martin slept “spooned up” or locked in each other’s embrace; the first move in the morning precipitated a small avalanche of snow in upon them, being the signal for a merry shout and a scamper down stairs to dress behind the stove in which their father had a roaring fire.

Having now completely paid for his farm and what improvements had been made, Mr. Seely employed what time he could spare from farm work in finishing the inside arrangements of the house.

The close of the fifth season on the farm was approaching, during which Mrs. Seely and Rosamond had been busily engaged—assisted by Walter and Martin—cutting and sewing carpet rags, which were wound in large balls, each color by itself. These were taken to Lockwood and woven into a very handsome carpet, with a “feather stripe” in the center of each large stripe, made of bright colored rags—twisted to the size of large cord on an old fashioned spinning wheel, on which also the family stocking yarn was spun by Rosamond and her mother. The whirling spindle had a fascination for the boys, whose curiosity led to such a near approach, as often to result in drawing their hair around it, forcing a scream of pain from them and the sudden stopping of the wheel; the shears and a

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shorn lock were the only means of delivering the young "Absalom." With the new carpet the parlor floor was covered, harmonizing with the plain furniture and pictures. The bedroom, opening out of the parlor, was furnished and kept for company or when any of the family were sick or needed quiet and rest.

When all was arranged, Mrs. Seely consented that Rosamond and Edward should invite a company of their young friends to supper and an evening's pastime.

Mrs. Seely and her husband felt such satisfaction with the manner in which their older children had performed their duties they were glad to afford them this pleasure.

The previous winter they entered company in the neighborhood; a few evenings were spent in sleigh rides; one, at an evening party in Lockwood, where they met many young people of the town, from whom they learned to dance. Some of these were invited by Rosamond and Edward. When they informed their mother that the guests from town wished to bring musicians and have music and dancing, which constituted their principal entertainment at social gatherings, she demurred. After considerable thought and many misgivings, fearing the tendency of the amusement, and yet not wishing her children considered lacking in "up-to-date" hospitality, she finally gave her consent that the uncarpeted, smoothly painted dining room floor be used—as Rosamond sang—for

"An hour of pleasure,
In the mazy dance."

"Thanksgiving Eve" witnessed the assemblage of a large company; as snow had fallen the day before, they came in cutters and sleighs from town and country; the merry jingling of bells, with the cheerful laughter of lighthearted people, broke the monotony of the quiet farm house.

Walter and Martin were fully awake to the merry sounds and cheerful greetings—running here and there, watching each new arrival alight upon the porch, after which John would take the reins, and, calling out, "Come on, b'ys, poile in!" the three would glide away to the barn; stabling the horses they hastened

A Social Party

back to meet the next arrivals. By eight o'clock the parlor was filled, some standing, others sitting, all—especially those from town—more or less engaged in animated talk and banter.

Walter was attracted by the elegant garments worn by the young ladies. Some were white as the snow, low in the neck and sleeveless; very thin and unsuited to the season—Walter thought.

The country garbs and manners of some were in striking contrast to those from town. The young men from the latter place showed more freedom in conversation, more familiarity with the young ladies. Walter heard one addressed as Clarence Farnsworth; he recalled the name at once of the young man Edward saw at the tavern, who removed the glasses from the table after the man was hurt. He appeared to be a favorite among the young ladies. He shook hands cordially with Edward and was delighted to meet Rosamond. As he held her hand some time, in low-voiced conversation, her cheeks were suffused with blushes. Following her, he entered the dining room, where Rosamond introduced him to her mother. Walter inhaled the odor of cloves or cardamon on his breath as he passed through the door. Sitting beside young ladies on the sofa Walter saw two of the young men who became intoxicated at his father's "barn raising." Samuel Morland and Joseph Reeves he also recognized and remembered their vile stories and profanity the previous Springtime while planting corn for his father.

The sound of music was heard in the dining room. Young men bowed to their partners and led them to the dancing floor. Walter could not understand the meaning of the musician's words; he watched with eagerness the movements of the young men and women as they danced, in time with the music; whirling around each other, crossing the room backward and forward—forming a circle, as the musician called—what sounded to Walter—"lemonade cold;" as the room was quite warm, he thought it a very proper thing to have and hoped to share it—but just then the young men, each putting his arm around the waist of his partner, with her hands on his arms, her head almost on his shoulder—they swiftly moved sideways around

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the room in a circle. They repeated the various movements again and again until the music ceased, when all returned to the parlor, apparently quite exhausted.

Four other couples soon came to the dining room; new music, and different movements from the others followed.

Among the dancers Walter recognized the young man who dropped the stick of timber on Mart Eldred's foot at the "barn raising." His face was very red. Walter wondered if the young lady with him knew he drank whiskey. He was very glad Rosamond was not dancing with him; then, remembering that Edward had seen Clarence Farnsworth—with whom Rosamond was then dancing—in the tavern where the men were drinking, he turned about and said to his father in a whisper: "Does that young man who is dancing with Rosamond drink anything that makes men drunk?"

His father smiled, and said, "I guess not, my son; why do you ask?"

"Because," said Walter, "don't you remember he was in the room at the tavern the night you went to get the black jug filled, Edward said, after that man was hurt, Mr. Gray called a young man, named Clarence Farnsworth, who came and took the tumblers from the table, after which he saw him pour something from a bottle and drink it."

"Well, never mind, my son," said his father, "that was a long time ago; he is not employed there now; he is clerking in a large store—where they do not sell anything bad."

"But couldn't he go and get it somewhere if he wanted to?" asked Walter.

"Yes," his father replied, "but I hope he saw enough evil at the tavern to keep him from ever visiting such a place again."

Going back to the open doorway, Walter watched those who were dancing. He failed—child as he was—to see any pleasure in it; on the contrary, it impressed him as something wrong; he looked at Samuel Morland and Joseph Reeves and recalled again their conversation in the field about some of the young ladies present, as he and Martin dropped the corn for them to cover. While he had not understood the meaning of much

A Social Party

they said—some of which was uttered in an audible whisper—he knew it must be wrong; now he wished his mother or Rosamond knew it, so they could advise the young ladies not to go with the young men or dance with them any more. He was glad when the dancing came to an end; he told his mother he never wished to learn. When a young lady patted him on the cheek and asked him to dance with her, he replied by saying, “It looks too silly to see folks acting so loving before people, and hopping about, sometimes almost falling down.” The answer caused all who heard it to laugh loudly—in which the young lady joined, at the same time her face was red with blushes.

The musicians came to the parlor; they played a few familiar tunes, in which the young people who sang joined with the words popular at the time. Walter—indeed each one present—was especially attracted by the fine voice and singing of Clarence Farnsworth.

Recitations followed; a young lady who had not participated in the dancing recited “The Raven;” when the cheering had subsided she read other selections of poetry and prose; Walter overheard several of those from Lockwood remark, “she is too awful solemn for anything; we want fun.” Supper was then served.

In the morning Rosamond and Edward did not arise to breakfast with the rest, as their company did not leave until long after the younger boys and their parents had retired.

Mrs. Seely, wishing to attend Thanksgiving services in Lockwood, her husband hitched up the gentlest horse to the “jumper” he had made the previous winter, and she and the boys drove to town. At the close of the services they drove to their Aunt Carrie’s with whom they ate dinner and spent the afternoon. The boys had a delightful time with their cousins, playing school and various games. Their mothers talked about sewing and housework and such other subjects as were suggested to their minds.

Aunt Carrie was Mr. Seely’s youngest sister. She had married when very young—sixteen—too young, by far. Three

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children had died in one week; the two surviving daughters were now her sole care. Her husband, much older than herself, had formed the habit of visiting the tavern evenings, frequently remaining until after midnight, then coming home very much under the influence of strong drink. One of the children died one night, after his return home so intoxicated he could not go for the physician. About that time she became a devoted Christian, hence bore his unkindness and neglect with great gentleness and forbearance, hoping thereby to win him to a better life. She knew, before they were married, he drank, but had obtained his promise to drink no more. After marriage the habit grew upon him rapidly. At the tavern he spent so much time and money his family lacked life's common comforts; when a party started from Lockwood bound for the gold fields of California he accompanied it, expecting to make a fortune in a day; thus his family was left wholly dependent on such a livelihood as his wife could earn with her needle.

Mr. Seely built for her, in Lockwood, a small cottage containing four rooms.

During the conversation that Thanksgiving afternoon she spoke to Mrs. Seely about her children that were gone; as they were boys, "it is comforting," she said, "to think they are beyond temptation, and will never cause anyone sorrow by following their father's example."

"I should share your feelings, I presume," said Mrs. Seely, after speaking of Rosalie, whose death she had never ceased to mourn, "if Mr. Seely was intemperate. He is so anxious about the boys; he has even given up the use of 'cherry bitters;' he will not allow intoxicating drinks used on the farm; so we do not feel that, with such an influence and example before our boys, there can be much danger of their going astray. As to Rosamond, you heard what she said when Edward was telling us about the man at the tavern; she is very decided and thoroughly dislikes anyone who is not strictly temperate. Your girls are growing rapidly toward young womanhood; with your experience and instruction before them you have nothing to fear on their account."

A Social Party

“If I was only sure of that!” said Aunt Carrie; “but who can tell what kind of husbands they will have if they marry? A young man will promise almost anything a young lady asks him to if he wants her to marry him; some will do it sincerely and really think they will fulfill their promise. Young women, you know, are very confiding; they put the utmost confidence in young men for whom they entertain a real affection. They fully believe their influence after marriage will strengthen every good quality a young man possesses and eradicate every wrong habit and moral weakness he has to contend with.”

“Very true,” said Mrs. Seely thoughtfully, “but observation seems to indicate that they do not always understand themselves or each other fully; it seems to do no good to advise girls what to do in such a case; it seems impossible for them to understand by any argument short of experience.”

Mrs. Seely observed a look of pain and sadness upon the face of her sister-in-law, which was so unlike the beautiful expression usually seen resting there, which in their girlhood days made her the “admired of all admirers.” Now also, her black, wavy hair was streaked with silver threads; frequent sighs escaped her lips like the trembling echoes of blasted hopes.

CHAPTER V.

A SOCIAL PARTY REVIEWED.

Changing the topic of conversation which seemed so painful to her, Aunt Carrie inquired about Rosamond's party.

"Mr. Seely and I decided to afford them this pleasure," Mrs. Seely replied, "as a reward, in part; also an encouragement, by showing our appreciation of their efforts to please us. Young people enjoy being together. Rosamond is nearly eighteen, Edward will soon be sixteen. We wish to give them all the advantage within our means. We do not expect to leave them great riches; but a fair education and a farm for each child we think will furnish them a good start in life.

"Our district school is very well conducted by Mr. Kennedy, who boards at our house. Neither Rosamond nor Edward attended the fall term; I had so much work in the house and Mr. Seely had such a large crop of corn to husk, we needed their help."

"I hope they enjoyed the party as much as we used to when we were young," said Aunt Carrie. "Don't you remember the time we went sleighriding while living in 'York State?' A runaway team ran against our sleigh, tipped us over, throwing us out into the snow."

"Yes, I remember it very well," said Mrs. Seely; "that was the time Mr. Seely was thrown under the horses feet and his nose was broken. I was very much frightened at the time, but when he recovered from the injury I was very glad the accident occurred, for he had such a large and homely Roman shaped nose; after it got well it did not look like the same nose; he looked so much better, I felt greatly pleased with the result."

At the foregoing view and statement of the case they both laughed heartily.

A Social Party Reviewed

“Where had we been that night, Sarah?” asked Aunt Carrie.

“If I remember correctly,” said Mrs. Seely, “we had been to Clyde.”

“Yes, we had,” said Aunt Carrie, after a moment’s thought; “there was a New Year’s party at the tavern; I met my husband there for the first time. Mother did not approve my going to dancing parties. She said all kinds of people met together; but so many were going from our neighborhood she finally gave her consent. I did not know how to dance; I only wished to see the others and enjoy the sleigh ride. I was too young to have a beau, as I was only fifteen. We had been there just a short time when I was introduced to Joel. He asked me if I danced; when I told him I had never danced a single step he offered to teach me; he said ‘all young ladies should know how to dance.’

“After watching the rest for awhile, I was sure I could do it without making mistakes, at least no more than some others did. Joel went down stairs; after he returned I went on the floor with him. I noticed his breath smelled of brandy, but I did not think much about it. You remember how long the room was? So many were dancing and the music was so lively. I became very much interested. He kept telling me how well I was doing.

“I learned the ‘Schottische’ and ‘Polka’ that night. He came after me several times that winter to attend parties with him. The next summer we were married. Mother asked me if Joel drank anything intoxicating. I replied that he did sometimes, but had promised to do so no more. I shall never forget the manner in which she said, ‘I am sorry you went to that ball in Clyde.’ ”

“I should not want Rosamond to attend a public ball,” said Mrs. Seely, “but I can see no special harm that can come from dancing at a private house, where the company is specially invited; there certainly can be no temptation to mislead one there.”

“Don’t you think,” said Aunt Carrie, “there is danger of young people becoming so infatuated with dancing they will not hesitate to go anywhere to engage in it?”

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"I remember very well how completely I was carried away with it; I did not care where we danced nor who was present, if Joel was with me; I felt satisfied and safe with him. Were there any of the young people from Lockwood at your house last night?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Seely, "I think there were six young ladies and some young men; the rest were young people who live in our neighborhood. I noticed quite a difference between them. Our girls—that is, Rosamond and those living near us—wore thick dresses, suited to the weather; the girls from town wore very thin dresses, with low necks and short sleeves. I must confess it made me cringe when I saw the familiar way in which some of the young men put their arms around the necks and shoulders of those young ladies on the dancing floor and in the parlor."

"Why, Sarah, did they dance at your house last night?" asked Aunt Carrie, in surprise.

"Why—yes," Mrs. Seely answered, with some embarrassment, when she observed Aunt Carrie's astonishment. "Edward preferred a 'candy pull,' but when the young people in town were invited they asked permission to bring Mr. Hamilton and his son with their violins that they might dance a little while.

"I told Rosamond it seemed to me they could dispense with the dancing; she said the young folks here are used to it and would consider her and Edward lacking in good manners if they objected to it, inasmuch as they had been invited to a party here and learned to dance. After they once began there was no time for anything but supper and a few songs and some verses read by Jessie Sawyer."

"Did Jessie dance?" asked Aunt Carrie.

"No," said Mrs. Seely, "she did not know how and said she did not wish to learn; she visited with Mr. Seely and me for some time; we took quite a fancy to her, she seems so sensible. Edward became acquainted with her last winter, so, at his request, Rosamond invited her."

"What young men came from Lockwood?" asked Aunt Carrie.

A Social Party Reviewed

"I think one they called Harry Channing; Rosamond introduced me to another named Clarence Farnsworth; I do not remember the names of others," Mrs. Seely replied.

"Harry is a very good young man," remarked Aunt Carrie; "I meet him at church whenever I am able to attend. Mr. Farnsworth is clerking in Mr. Golden's store; he was employed in Mr. Gray's tavern until a short time ago, when his friends became alarmed for fear he was forming too strong an appetite for intoxicating drinks; handling them every day was too great a temptation, so they persuaded Mr. Golden to let him come there. He is very polite; customers—especially ladies—like to have him wait on them; they say he is the best clerk they ever had."

"I hope he will not go near the tavern again," said Mrs. Seely; "I should feel very sad, indeed, to have Rosamond go in company with him if he has bad habits, or if he does not choose good company."

"He asked my consent last night to take her to a party Christmas eve; I consented, but told him I did not deem it best for her to be from home very many evenings as she is attending school. He said he fully endorsed my judgment, but the holiday vacation would give her ample time for recreations and rest also before school begins again."

"I am glad, Sarah," said Aunt Carrie, "that you said what you did to him about Rosamond's school; here the young people are so excited over their dancing parties the teachers complain about their neglect of school work. Some are out two or more nights each week until midnight and often later; sometimes at private houses; frequently they meet at the tavern ball room. Of course it will undermine their health as well as unsettle their minds for study."

Looking out of the window just then Aunt Carrie saw her pastor—Elder Palmer—entering the gate. Laying aside her knitting, she went to the door—as he rang the bell—to greet him. As she opened the door and invited him in, he shook her hand cordially.

Having introduced him to Mrs. Seely, she took his hat, over-

Chronicles of a Farm House

coat and gloves. When all were seated the conversation passed naturally from general topics to morals and religious duties.

Mrs. Seely took occasion to say, "We were discussing social customs and amusements when you entered, Mr. Palmer; we would be glad to know your opinion and ask your advice."

"Of what particular custom or amusement were you speaking, Mrs. Seely?" he inquired, pleasantly.

"We were speaking especially about young people's parties," she replied.

"Indeed," he said, after a moment's pause, "I have formed a profound love for young people, having been young myself. I entertain a very high ideal for them; but, I must say it with sorrow, the most of them are delighted with what unfits them for attaining the highest and best; I almost despair at times; I should always despair, were it not that now and then one and another catches my idea and approves, then practices the measures necessary to attain such excellency in youth as will lead to true nobility in manhood and womanhood."

"What do you think about dancing, Mr. Palmer?" asked Aunt Carrie.

"I have no opinion based on personal experience," he replied, "for I never danced; I am wholly indebted for my opinion, such as it is, to observation and the testimony and experience of others in whom I have confidence.

"As to the moral effects—after a long and careful observation—I think I can say truthfully, those who become infatuated to any degree with dancing, to that degree they will not yield their minds to sound thinking, nor their hearts to spiritual light and truth, so long as their love for such amusement continues.

"I may safely say farther, when people—young or old—who have become accustomed to thoughtful reflection and pious living, engage in it—even in a domestically social way, or to develop the graces of a genteel bearing—a vitiating effect is produced upon their character and conduct."

"I know very well," said Aunt Carrie, "as long as I took delight in such things I had no desire to be a Christian; when my

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children died, I felt I must find comfort in the Lord alone or die of grief. I asked God for grace and consolation; in answer to my prayer both were given; since then it has seemed a perverted use of time and energy to engage in such vain amusements."

"I expected to hear as much from you," said Mr. Palmer "As to the physical effects of dancing—upon young ladies especially—I wish to speak.

"I need not mention that which you, as mothers so well know, would be the effects of late hours, late suppers, warm or overheated rooms, light dressing, cold drafts, and exposure going to and from the places of gathering.

"But there is another item of awful and vital significance, which has been forced upon my attention and ought to be taken into consideration in studying the physical effects of dancing. I do not know, however," he said, hesitating, "whether I better mention it or not."

"Do you think," asked Mrs. Seely, "that in a private house where invited guests are assembled—where a father dances with his wife or daughter, or a brother dances with his sister or mother, that any immoral result or tendency will spring from it?"

"Do they do it, Mrs. Seely?" he asked, with much animation. "Suppose a law was passed and rigidly enforced, making it a criminal offense for any man to dance with other than his wife, mother, sister or daughter, how long—do you suppose—would the dance hold its sway and fascinating power over the virtuous and refined, saying nothing of the ignorant and vicious?"

All remained quietly thinking for a moment; Mr. Palmer broke the silence by saying, "I trust, ladies, I shall be pardoned for any seeming lack of propriety if I illustrate what I felt bound to say a few moments ago—but hesitated to express—by giving the experience of a man who moved in the highest circles of refined society, himself a man of culture, blessed with a lovely wife and a family of sons and daughters devoted to each other, all of whom were members of my congregation. During a revival service I was conducting he became deeply exercised; very soon his sons showed signs of deep contrition.

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They were all blessed with renewed hearts and the entire family entered the fellowship of the church. They had been special devotees of dancing and other social pastimes.

“The father called at my study shortly after uniting with the church. The subject of dancing being mentioned, he said he had called especially to speak to me about it, that I might use his experience as an instruction and warning to others.

“He informed me that, in early life, he had been a dancing master, having the sons and daughters of the first families in different cities under his instruction. His wife, who had been his pupil—a paragon of grace and gentility—he said he had not danced with but twice since they were married. When his daughters were grown he found not pleasure enough in dancing with them to direct their education along that line. His sons became proficient, but they seemed to take no pleasure, rather shrank from dancing with their sisters or mother nor did this lack of interest, which could not be disguised, awaken any regrets or protests in the minds of his wife and daughters.

“‘Of late,’ he said, with expressions of deep emotion, ‘a new light has streamed in upon my inner past life, also upon that of my wife; in the exchange of confidences, growing out of our illuminated selves and understandings of each other, we find no pages in all our history so dark and vile as those containing the records of our mental musings and passionate burnings, awakened and fired by the liberty of bodily contact, admissible nowhere unchallenged and resented save in the social dance. As we feared, and had every reason to expect, the experiences of our sons and daughters—as we have learned from them—has not been unlike our own. Owing to the heat and excitement of the exercise, the liberty of bodily contact—perhaps in some forms of social dancing more than in others—the effects of exhilarating beverages and stimulating food, they have confessed, with tears and shame, that—even in their own home—they have been violently incited to unlawful desires and have been made the subjects of unchaste solicitations.’

“The man wept bitterly at the remembrance—as he said—of the dangers to which he and his wife, as the natural guard-

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ians of their darling offspring, had exposed them by their worldly precepts and example.”

Mr. Palmer then mentioned several more instances of similar import, after which the ladies both thanked him for the candid way in which he had answered their questions.

Hearing the voices of the children at play in the adjoining room, he inquired of Aunt Carrie if he might have the pleasure of meeting them.

With a cordial greeting, after they had entered the room, Mr. Palmer invited Walter and Martin to attend church and Sunday school with their cousins. After a brief prayer, he bade them all goodbye.

So pleasant and instructive did Mrs. Seely feel his call to have been to her, she resolved to attend church the following Sabbath; the boys promised their cousins they would come with her and remain to Sunday school.

As it was nearly sundown, Mrs. Seely and the boys hastened homeward, reaching the gate just as the sun was sinking out of sight, leaving a faint blush upon the fleecy clouds that was reflected on the snowy mantle that covered the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW DECISIONS.

The Sunday morning after Thanksgiving day Walter and Martin were up bright and early preparing to attend church with their mother, after which they were to enter a Sunday school for the first time.

Lockwood could be plainly seen from Mrs. Seely's kitchen window. Church spires were in plain sight. The distance required half an hour to walk; the boys were filled with many questionings of mind as to how a Sunday school would be conducted; how they would feel with everyone about them strangers, except their cousins. When they were ready to start Walter saw through the window a large flock of prairie chickens flying over the fields. If anything had a special fascination for him it was a gun. Wild ducks and other game were plentiful; sometimes with Edward, at other times with Martin, he would wander all day over the prairies or along the streams hunting.

Frequently, on Sunday morning, after the chores were done and all became quiet about the premises, as there were no books in the house that were interesting to boys of his age, he would ask his mother's permission to go and shoot something for dinner or supper; sometimes his father accompanied him; not infrequently he went alone.

At such times his mother's words of caution would ring in his ears; she had often said she felt afraid to have him out hunting on Sunday; it was a sacred day. Quoting the old adage, "better the day, better the deed," which he had often heard older people quote under similar circumstances—promising to be very careful—he would spend the day wandering through the fields; occasionally the report of his gun could be heard ringing out on the Sabbath stillness. Somehow a strange feeling of sadness and fear would come over him, which he could not



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shake off, save for a few moments at a time, when a rabbit would bound up before him, or a flock of birds would invite a salute from his gun, leaving one or more of their number behind. When loading his gun he carefully held the muzzle away from him, so no harm could befall him from an accidental discharge; on week days he felt no fear nor used any special precautions to prevent accident. As he watched the flock of prairie chickens that Sunday morning they began lighting on the trees in the orchard.

Hastily getting his gun, he hurried toward them, just as his father drove the "democrat" up to the front gate and called those who were going to church to come and get in, as he had decided to go with them. Seeing Walter creeping along the fence toward the orchard, he called him so loudly to come back—or they would have to leave him at home—that the birds took flight before he got in range of them.

Mr. Seely said, impatiently, "I will not go to church if I have to go in late."

At the services they were very much pleased with Mr. Palmer's sermon; at the close he met them in the aisle and greeted them cordially.

Mr. Seely and his wife returned home leaving the boys in Sunday school. They were placed with several town boys in a class taught by Mr. Cox, an aged gentleman. Some of the boys eyed Walter and Martin from head to foot, then whispered to each other behind their books and laughed. No doubt they were making sport of the plain garments and awkward manners of the strange boys from the country. So delighted, however, were Walter and Martin with the singing and the bright array of scholars in the school, they paid little heed to what the rest of the class were doing. It reminded them of exhibition day at their country school. They pleased their teacher by reciting the verses of the lesson in a ready and correct manner, their cousins having told them on Thanksgiving day where the lesson could be found. They each received cards and papers. Frequently on the way home they stopped to examine them and read the stories.

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Monday morning Rosamond and Edward again entered school with the younger boys in the white school house, plainly in view across the prairie. Several young people were present for the first time. The little school house—with its large, wooden seats and desks, marked and cut with as varied designs as the hieroglyphics on an Egyptian monument—was filled with scholars.

Mr. Kennedy's time was wholly occupied hearing recitations and aiding one and another of the older scholars in solving difficult problems, or in pronouncing hard words for smaller children, who would come to him at his desk; or, rising in their seats, would each snap their thumb and finger together with a sound like the report of a popgun, to draw his attention.

All the pupils made rapid improvement. Some of the young men were attending school for the last time, expecting to begin teaching, to work on a farm, or learn a trade. These young men were many of them Mr. Kennedy's equal in size and strength. No test of strength, however, occurred to mar the harmony between teacher and school, until near the close of the term. A man grown boy of inferior scholarship—who made himself quite obnoxious to smaller scholars, by throwing their caps into ponds of water, keeping their balls, hiding their dinner pails, and similar acts which he was too cowardly to perpetrate on larger boys—defied Mr. Kennedy's discipline, giving as a reason his father's advice to "do as he pleased about obeying the teacher." The conflict was short, but terrific. Amid the shuffling of feet, the crashing of benches, the cries and screams of frightened girls and small boys, mingled with the laughter of the larger ones, the refractory scholar learned who was master; with smarting palms and corrugated back, he became from that hour "a sadder, but a wiser pupil," although reinforced the following morning by his father's threatening presence in the school room, when the irate sire exposed the back of his son—which was striped as a zebra. Mr. Kennedy calmly proceeded with his duties; peace soon reigned and continued to the close of school.

The following winter Edward went to Chicago to live with an

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uncle's family; he entered the city schools with his cousins; there new views of life, strange, indeed, to a boy from the country, came to him; his sturdy strength and clean habits prepared him to utilize the best and reject the evil he saw.

Rosamond remained at home, reciting to Mr. Kennedy nights and mornings, in a few advanced studies she had not completed the winter before. Her teacher became very deeply interested in her and her studies; many beautiful gifts were the tokens of his friendship.

Now grown to womanhood, developed in all the rural graces becoming her age, she still retained the cheerful spirit, the well rounded form and face, and the rosy cheeks, that suggested her name in childhood.

Mr. Kennedy became her escort to church on Sunday evenings, to lectures and concerts during the week in Lockwood or to a spelling match or singing school in a neighboring school house.

Clarence Farnsworth, after a year's absence—clerking at a tavern in a southern city—returned to Lockwood and called at Mr. Seely's.

Rosamond's correspondence with him had been the occasion of frequent conversations with her mother, who often expressed a fear that his associations would prove injurious to him. Mrs. Seely referred to Aunt Carrie's experience and the causes that led to her husband's intemperate habits.

Such conversations would usually result in Rosamond's yielding to a passionate fit of weeping, whereupon her mother would drop the subject or speak words of comfort to her daughter, in her heart hoping for the best.

Mr. Seely always treated Clarence with respect, seldom mentioning his name, however, unless to answer some question now and then which Mrs. Seely asked concerning him.

With the younger boys he was a prime favorite, always remembering—as he did—to bring them nuts or candy; occasionally presenting them with pieces of money.

This first visit from the South occurred on a bright Sabbath morning hitching the ponies, he drove from Lockwood, he

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passed up the narrow walk between the long beds filled with flowers in full bloom. On the front porch sat Mr. Seely reading. Greeting Clarence cordially he invited him in where Mrs. Seely and Rosamond were sitting. After speaking to them, as he was about to take a seat, he observed the boys at play in the back yard; stepping to the open window he called them, at the same time taking from his pocket a package which he gave them.

After a short time spent with the family he and Rosamond went to the parlor, closing the door after them.

In the dining room Mrs. Seely and her husband engaged in an earnest conversation.

"I see very plainly now, and have for some time," said Mrs. Seely, "that I made a great mistake when I gave my consent to Rosamond's attending parties in Lockwood. She was thrown into a new class of society, at an age without maturity of judgment, that could read human character or discern real worth; she was carried away with show and the attentions paid her; before we knew it her chief thought and affections were centered on such things and Clarence had completely won her heart."

"Well," said Mr. Seely, "I do not object to young people having a pleasant time, but I do object to their forming habits they cannot control, which cause expense and sorrow to those connected with them. Look at what Sister Carrie has suffered through Joel's conduct. I do all I can afford for her, but it is not half I wish to do or that she really needs."

"After father died, as I was the oldest son—although under age—I was left in charge of mother and the children. I was not only willing but glad Carrie was to marry—although rather young; it would lighten my care; I could do better by the rest. I knew Joel frequented the tavern and sometimes went on a 'spree;' I did not sense its meaning as I have since; now I see no prospect that he will ever do any better; he might as well be in California as here, where, if he does not help her, he will not hang around and annoy her."

"The only objection in the world I have to Clarence is just the things in him that ruined Joel. I am afraid, yes, certain,

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that Rosamond—if she marries him—will experience very much what Carrie has suffered.”

“But you know,” said Mrs. Seely, “Clarence has promised Rosamond he will never again indulge in strong drink in any form.”

“Joel made the same promise to Carrie,” said Mr. Seely; “how soon he broke it; I tell you, Sarah, the more I think of Rosamond—our only daughter—ever being placed as her Aunt Carrie is, it seems more than I can endure; now is the time to prevent it. She had better feel sad now, letting time and other influences heal her wounded feelings, than suffer a wound that cannot be healed.”

Mr. Seely, although ordinarily very calm, was now most deeply agitated—not with anger, for he seldom—if ever—yielded to passion; a deep foreboding rested upon his mind; he felt unable to dispel it; rising to his feet he paced back and forth across the room with downcast eyes.

“Have you talked with Clarence about the matter?” asked Mrs. Seely.

“I have not,” he replied, “I have told you and Rosamond how I feel; I supposed you or she had told him. If he had a trade or suitable education for teaching school I should consider him more capable of supporting her, if he remains sober and industrious.

“If Clarence had the ‘make up’ of Mr. Kennedy I should have no misgivings. He is not only temperate, moral and industrious, he has a trade. He earned considerable money making flour barrels in the shop down by the gate—working nights, mornings and Saturdays.”

Just then the parlor door opened and Clarence, holding his hat and a package of letters in his left hand, came out; bowing to Mrs. Seely and her husband, bidding them good morning, he stepped out of the front door and passed slowly down the walk.

With a flood of tears Rosamond turned and entered the parlor again. Mrs. Seely, knowing full well the deep sorrow and disappointment that were crushing her daughter’s heart, went to assure her it would all turn out for the best.

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basket squares, besides tying numerous comforts—stitched in this and that reminiscence of their girlhood and wedding days; they rallied Rosamond and any of her young lady friends who chanced to be present—about their approaching change in life's relationship—who, while protesting innocence of such intentions, were each looking forward to the event, as to a sunlit day, without a cloud to cross the sky.

Carefully the feathery robe plucked from the downy breasts of the large flocks of geese and ducks that hovered all summer around the pond in the rear of the barn, was saved to provide beds on which weary limbs and tired brains could rest at the close of coming days of toil and care.

An extra quantity of fruit, pickles and preserves was prepared and stored away to be transported to the new home. It was no small surprise when a large basket of delicious peaches were received from the sunny South, the label bearing the writing of a familiar hand, addressed to Mrs. Seely.

Rosamond and her mother each seemed to live two lives through all the busy summer months. In their thoughts and conversation each was living in the old and in the new home at the same time.

No wonder Mrs. Seely often sighed in the moments of silence as she thought of the coming days when she would sit there alone, or pass from room to room, with her musings answered back only by the echoes of her own footsteps. No wonder Rosamond would raise her eyes quickly, half alarmed lest her mother was working too hard—for into her young heart was entering naught that savored of loneliness or sorrow.

It is not so with mothers, when sons go out from under the parental roof, nor is it a'ways so when a daughter—from a number—is taken from the fireside; it is when an *only* daughter—the companion of her mother, the idol of her father, the delight of her brothers—goes away, the brightest flower seems to have been plucked and borne from the home garden.

Edward, having formed many new and pleasant acquaintances, had not felt so keenly the loss of his sister's company since she began attending various gatherings with Mr. Kennedy

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or Clarence Farnsworth; he did not therefore offer any serious protests—other than playful banterings—against his sister leaving home.

The smaller boys regarded the coming event, rather as a holiday occasion, when the house would be filled with company and an ample dinner or supper would be provided. As they had never seen a marriage service their curiosity was all alive.

Mr. Seely had largely yielded up his fears that Clarence Farnsworth's good resolutions would fail him in the hour of trial; he had taken a more hopeful view of his character and determination, since the day he talked with him at the gate; he made every arrangement that would seem to afford him and Rosamond a joyful wedding and a prosperous future.

A wide circle of friends discussed the coming event and frequently commented on the principal participants.

During the period of preparation Walter accompanied his father to Lockwood. While waiting in Mr. Golden's store for his return from another part of town the merchant—not knowing Walter—remarked to another gentleman, "Mr. Seely's daughter is to be married next month."

"To whom?" was asked.

"To Clarence Farnsworth," was the reply of Mr. Golden.

"What!" said the gentleman, "the young man who clerked for you two years ago? I should hardly think a man so radical as Mr. Seely is on the subject of temperance would allow it, for Clarence has been quite dissipated."

"Yes, he has," Mr. Golden replied, "and for a long time Mr. Seely positively refused to give his consent, but the influence of his daughter, who is very handsome, and as sensible as she is handsome, worked such a change in Clarence, I guess he thought her influence over him would fully prevent his falling into dissipated habits again."

"I sincerely hope," said the gentleman, "Mr. Seely will not be disappointed, for his own sake as well as for the girl's; he is as fine a citizen as we have in the county and well deserves the public honors that have been conferred upon him; while I think he is too particular in refusing his harvest hands their

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‘bitters,’ I presume he has good reasons for it. Indeed, Mr. Golden, I sometimes wonder where matters will end if we cannot control the drinking habits of our young men. How many, over fourteen years of age, who live here, and attend Sunday school and the public schools, but have been in the habit of going to the tavern? Even young boys are treated to sling and whiskey punch; I have been trying to prevent my boys going, but after all the advice I have given them, I have found them there evenings when I dropped in to chat with Mr. Gray.”

“Yes,” responded Mr. Golden, “it is a serious problem; something must be done to put a stop——”

Just then Mr. Seely drove up and stopped before the door; he motioned to Walter, who gathered up some parcels and went out without hearing the conversation further; yet what had been said was a new seed thought in his boyish mind.

Despite the somber clouds, the rain and muddy thoroughfares, all the invited guests came on the appointed day to the wedding. The cheerful company seemed to be in lively contrast to the gloomy state of nature without.

After the ceremony and a sumptuous feast, the guests took their departure. Many fond and lingering farewells were spoken to Rosamond by her school girl friends and former associates, with whom she had been a favorite, and from whom many tokens of friendship and affection had been received.

After a few days, spent largely in receiving calls and making farewell visits, Rosamond and her husband went to their southern home. The vacancy their absence caused, each strove to fill as best they could.

In this they were greatly aided by Aunt Carrie and her daughters, who remained a few days to assist Mrs. Seely in her sewing and housework.

While engaged in the former occupation, Mrs. Seely frequently took occasion to ask her sister-in-law many questions bearing upon the Bible and religious experience, for she believed her to possess a thorough knowledge of both.

“I have been thinking upon these subjects a great deal,” Mrs. Seely remarked one day while they were alone—as the children

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were at school, and Mr. Seely and Edward had gone to the timber for wood.

“The subjects are very important,” said Aunt Carrie. “You remember Mr. Palmer said in his sermon last Sunday, ‘*who-soever will*, may know for himself, and should seek without delay.’ ”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Seely, “he also said, ‘mothers especially, should be Christians; I have thought possibly I have not done my whole duty by Rosamond and Edward; while they have been very good children, they have not taken very much interest in church or Sunday school for some time past. They spend their time reading books they borrow, many of which I do not think are of special benefit to them.’ ”

“Do Walter and Martin enjoy attending Sunday school?” asked Aunt Carrie.

“Yes, very much,” Mrs. Seely replied, “they do not wish to stay away for snow or rain. They each received a handsome Bible for reciting their Bible verses the very best of any in their class. I have noticed a great change in Walter. He has been very fond of hunting on Sunday; I always felt worried when he was gone, and have often told him how wrong it is; since he has attended Sunday school he has read most of the Bible and does not offer to hunt on Sunday.

“Recently he told me a dream he had last summer. He asked me first if I believed dreams are true. I told him I thought they were sometimes. He then told me that in his dream he seemed to be out in the yard playing; suddenly he began to rise from the ground; he went up until he was among the clouds and could not see the earth nor the sun. All around him it was misty but very light. Through the mist a man came toward him until he could see his face and form distinctly; his hair, which was golden brown, was parted back from the center of his forehead and hung in waves down to his shoulders; he had on a light garment reaching from his shoulders to his feet; he stood a few yards away with his hands clasped before him.

“Walter said he looked like the pictures of Jesus in the Sun-

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day school papers; he thought it must be the Saviour who stood before him; instead of being afraid, he was glad to see him, he looked so kind. Just then a large pulpit or desk shaped structure distinctly appeared, having a larger book on it than he had ever seen; this, Jesus took and, laying it upon his left arm, he opened it and turned over several pages, until he came to a place where two pages were written nearly full of very black lines. Walter saw his own name at the top.

“He thought at once the lines were the record of his sins; he was astonished there were so many of them. Many he had forgotten, but plainly remembered them then.

“He said as he looked at the pages, then at Jesus, who looked at him so kindly, he felt very sorry he had said and done so many wicked things. The Saviour seemed to know how he felt, for immediately he smiled and raised his right hand, then placed it upon his name; as he did so, an expression of pain passed over his face; a drop of blood oozed out of each pore in his hand; he passed his hand over Walter’s name and each dark line; as soon as the blood touched the black letters they disappeared and the pages became white as snow and Walter saw his name alone, written at the top of the spotless pages, in letters of gold. He told me I awakened him just then by calling him to breakfast. The vision or dream evidently made a deep impression on his mind, and led to a marked improvement in his conduct.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE DECISIONS.

"It certainly was a very remarkable dream," said Aunt Carrie, as she wiped the tears from her eyes; the recital of the dream had moved her deeply.

"Shortly after the baptism of your oldest daughter," continued Mrs. Seely, "Walter followed me upstairs one night; I was doing some work and he seemed anxious to ask me some question; at last he said he wished to be baptized and unite with the church, as his cousin had done. I told him—as he is only twelve years old—I feared he was too young to understand what it means. He said nothing more about it then, nor has he since; and I have noticed he has lost much of his interest in the Sunday school of late, nor does he seem patient and obedient toward Mr. Seely and me, nor as kind to his brothers; the teacher has informed me he is not as good a boy in school as formerly. He has been very much attached to Miss Alden, his teacher, who told the scholars they should each try and aim high in life and avoid everything that would hinder their success. Walter told me her words made him feel ashamed of his mischief in school."

"Do you think I did right in thus speaking to him, Aunt Carrie?"

"To be candid with you, Sarah, I do not," was the frank reply. "I fear Walter thought you did not wish him to be a Christian. It discouraged him so he gave up trying. Satan will overcome anyone who does not resist, asking the Lord for help. Do you remember the quotation in the minister's sermon last Sunday,

" 'The pebble in the brooklet dropped
Has turned the course of a mighty river.
The dewdrop on the baby plant
Has dwarfed the giant oak forever.' "

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"One thing is certain," said Mrs. Seely, "I do not wish to do anything wrong, nor stand in the way of my children. When Rosamond and Edward were quite small Mr. Seely frequently read the Bible to them and me. We thought quite seriously at one time we would unite with the church; we neglected our duty, and I do not know that we will ever get right again."

"Edward has given his name into the church in Lockwood," said Aunt Carrie.

"Has he?" said Mrs. Seely, greatly surprised; "I had not heard of it;" after a few moments pause she added feelingly, "I am very glad to know it. I try to pray for Rosamond now that she is away; somehow I do not seem to have any faith—at least I do not feel my prayers are heard."

Aunt Carrie told her she must not let her feelings govern her praying, but pray in faith through Christ whom God loves and who loves us—that is, she must offer her prayers to God, believing Christ endorsed them, just as Mr. Seely, being rich, might put his name on a note with a poor man, then the man could go to the bank and draw all the money the note called for."

"I have sometimes felt," said Mrs. Seely, "my heart is like the pages of the book Walter saw in his dream."

"That was just the way I used to feel," said Aunt Carrie. "When you told about his seeing the Saviour put his bleeding hand upon the book, making the dark lined pages white, I thought of the time when I felt so sad after my children died. I tried to pray, but my heart seemed to be so cold and dark; my past life came up before me. I asked God to forgive the past; I promised to serve Him. Suddenly my sadness left me; I was filled with light and love and joy; I wished to tell everyone how to be happy; the way seemed so plain and easy."

"That is what has been so hard for me to make up my mind to do—to *tell others*," said Mrs. Seely. "You know, my husband has often said, within the past few years, he does not believe in sudden conversions; that there is no change of heart only what we make in our own minds; I think I would find it very hard to tell him my feelings."

"Did not the Saviour say, 'he that confesseth me before men,

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him will I also confess before my Father and the Holy Angels?" "asked Aunt Carrie.

"When you are willing to let your light shine anywhere, Sarah, you will feel such a peace and joy that you will be glad to bear the cross; then the Lord will seem very near you when you pray."

"I have often wondered why everyone cannot be good," said Mrs. Seely; "I know I wish to be; somehow, something keeps me from being what I ought to be."

"I often wondered myself," said Aunt Carrie, "until a few weeks ago, when Mr. Palmer preached a sermon explaining the source and manner of temptations. He said, 'when God created man, he made him with a body, soul and spirit.' "

"I always supposed the soul and spirit were the same thing," said Mrs. Seely.

"So did I," Aunt Carrie replied, "but he explained that 'the soul consists of our intellect, our heart or affections—sometimes termed sensibilities—and our will. Our spirit is what makes us bear God's likeness or image; it is with our spirit we worship Him. The Holy Spirit comes and fills our spirit with divine love, joy, peace. Until Satan tempted our first parents they had no thought of doing aught but what pleased their Creator. They loved him; he talked or communed with them constantly and they were happy.' "

"Who is Satan and where did he come from, Carrie? Did Mr. Palmer explain that?" asked Mrs. Seely.

"Yes," was the reply; "Mr. Palmer said Satan and his angels were once angels in heaven, but they kept not their first estate or rebelled against God and were cast out. After God made man so pure and happy, Satan found Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; because he hated God and everything God loved or that loved God, he strove to destroy man's happiness by persuading Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit and she persuaded Adam to do the same.

"Listening to Satan, the desire to eat of the forbidden fruit became so strong, what God had said was doubted or forgotten. Eve believed Satan when he said she should not die if she ate;

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thus Satan won her heart away from God, until, to please *herself*, she disobeyed him and drew Adam's heart away with her. When they considered what they had done they felt condemned and were afraid of God. They endeavored to do an impossible thing—hide from the presence of God."

"Do you suppose Satan tempts people that way now?" asked Mrs. Seely. "I wonder if that is why people who are not Christians are afraid to die?"

"Yes," said Aunt Carrie in reply to the first question; "Mr. Palmer stated that every child born into the world is first as innocent of actual guilt as Adam and Eve were before they were tempted; if they die before yielding to temptation they will enter heaven; the Bible says, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' When I read that passage, Sarah, I feel reconciled to the death of my little children; they were innocent and are safe forever. In his sermon Mr. Palmer said 'Satan begins to influence very little children, causing them to wish to please themselves and have their own way; when they are allowed to do it they become disobedient and self-willed; if they are not prevented they will grow up disregarding the wishes of parents and teachers and will break the laws of the land and the commandments of God.'

"He said, 'we should teach our children very early in life that there are evil spirits that put naughty thoughts into their minds, causing them to say and do wrong things; we should teach them to ask God to send His good Spirit to keep Satan out of their hearts. All people need God's help to keep them from doing wrong, for Satan is always near to tempt us.'

"He used an illustration that made the subject very plain; he said, 'our WILL is like a door on each side of our heart. On one side it opens toward the body. Satan comes to that door and tells us about the beautiful things we see—how they would gratify our bodily passions and appetites; he tells us about pleasures, honor and ease, until we forget any danger lurking in them or to which they might lead; we continue to think about and long for them—finally the will yields—the door

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opens—Satan enters our hearts, corrupts our affections and desires, until we engage in all manner of wrong doing.’ ”

“I suppose,” said Mrs. Seely, “that is what the Bible means when it says, ‘led about by Satan at his will.’ ”

“Yes,” said Aunt Carrie, “and Mr. Palmer said further, ‘when we let the evil spirit into our heart we cease to love the Good Spirit and force him out on the other side and the door of the *will* is closed against him. Then we begin to be unhappy and fearful, for Satan fills our heart; he knows no happiness and leads no one to it, but farther and farther away from peace and joy. The Good Spirit waits without, ever ready to come in again and cast Satan out; if we call for him and open the door to our heart—which is our will—he will enter.’ ”

“I was reading the other day,” said Mrs. Seely, “where the Saviour says, ‘behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open unto me, I will come in and sup with him and he with me.’ Do you suppose the reason people do not succeed in being good is owing to the presence of Satan in their hearts, deceiving them as to the real cause of their failure? If they would let the Saviour in—which I suppose means the same as letting the Good Spirit control us—he would banish Satan from our hearts and help us to be good?”

“Most certainly that is the teaching of the Bible, and it has been my experience,” said Aunt Carrie. “The Saviour said, ‘without me, ye can do nothing.’ How often people make good resolutions, then break them! Satan objects to no one making good resolutions as long as they do not invoke and admit the presence of the Good Spirit to help fulfill them. If people only realized the true cause of their wrong doing—which they do not, Satan even causing many to believe there is no Evil Spirit, only their own ignorance or weakness—or something inherited—they would be filled with alarm and sorrow on account of Satan’s presence and control over them. They would plead with the Good Spirit to enter, drive Satan out, and change their vile affections caused by Satan’s influence, then implant a true love that makes whatever is innocent and holy our delight and comfort.”

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Aunt Carrie smiled as she uttered this last sentence. It recalled her own experience and increased her satisfaction in pointing her friend to the path of life and peace.

"I have often wondered how you could be so cheerful and patient in all your troubles, Carrie, said Mrs. Seely, "now I understand."

Thus a plain seamstress and a farmer's wife, with but limited education and knowledge of the world and of books, were comprehending and explaining the origin of sin in the human heart—the direct result of Satan's influence on each person; by actual experience one had obtained through repentance and prayer and faith, deliverance from Satan's power and was directing another in the way that was soon to lead her into the enjoyment of "like precious faith." That which has been withheld from the wise and prudent, who have sought to explain the origin of sin by human wisdom and philosophy, was revealed unto babes in understanding.

That evening Mr. Vinton, one of the ministers in Lockwood, was to preach in the school house near Mr. Seely's home; he and his family were to attend the services, accompanied by Aunt Carrie and her daughters.

Mr. Vinton frequently went into the country and held evening services in the school houses. The house was very full of people at this service. Mr. Vinton's singing and his impressive sermon made a deep impression upon many—especially upon Mrs. Seely and Walter. The next week Aunt Carrie returned home, taking Mrs. Seely with her, leaving her oldest daughter to help her cousins and her uncle keep house a few days.

Mr. Vinton was conducting nightly revival services in his church; Walter and several schoolmates, who heard him preach in the school house, walked over to Lockwood to attend the meetings. All the boys were charmed with the singing, and listened respectfully to the earnest prayers; at the same time, they were astonished at the disorderly conduct of several town boys who were crowded together near the door.

After the sermon, Mr. Vinton invited those who wished to become Christians to come forward and kneel about the altar;

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many did so and continued during a season of singing and prayer. Before the meeting closed different persons—men and women—arose in their places and spoke of their experience and desires on religious lines.

The voice of one woman especially arrested Walter's attention; although she was standing across the church from him, it sounded like his mother's voice. He listened while she said, "I have long felt a desire to be a true Christian, but I have kept my light 'under a bushel;' from this time forth I will endeavor to let it shine before the world."

Walter was deeply moved; he could scarcely restrain his tears when he knew it was indeed his mother. He recalled the night when he told her of his desire to be baptized, and she thought he was too young to understand its religious import; he remembered, also, how discouraged he became; an oath almost came to his lips as he left her and entered his room, thinking to himself, "my mother does not wish me to be a Christian;" when he knelt to pray, as had been his wont for several months, a strange impression—almost a protesting voice—had come to him, saying, "how *dare* you pray so soon after having almost uttered an oath?"

He remembered also how unhappy he became and soon fell back into his wicked ways. But now he was two years older and as his mother had become a Christian she could tell him all its meaning and show him the path of duty.

After reaching home that night he stopped at the well; kneeling under the cherry tree near by, he tried to pray, but his heart seemed too dark and sad; suddenly he heard what sounded like approaching footsteps; hastily springing to his feet he entered the house.

Taking a book from the library—which the trustees had recently purchased for the school district—he tried to read. He had become familiar with the lives of several celebrated men; especially had the lives of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay fired his mind with an ambition to be a lawyer; now he could not fix his mind upon his reading. Something seemed to be softly whispering to him, "are you willing to peach the Gospel,

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if I will help you to be a Christian?" He did not enjoy the question, nor could he silence the Questioner. The following day, with the question still in his thoughts, he went alone far into the field secretly carrying a Testament with him. Counting off a score of stakes in the fence and opening his Testament he selected a verse for a text; he tried to preach a sermon, imagining the stakes were people. After uttering a few sentences he could think of no more to say; thankful the stakes were not real people to laugh at his failure, grievously disappointed that he had not met with success in his attempt to preach, upon which he had decided to base his consent to become a minister if he became a Christian—he cast himself down, with his face upon the ground and wept bitterly. "I cannot preach," he cried aloud, "therefore I cannot be a Christian." Arising from the ground and wiping away his tears, he returned to the house with a sad and heavy heart. The following Sabbath evening he went again to hear Mr. Vinton preach. When he invited all who wished to come and kneel for prayer, Walter hesitated, saying to himself "if I become a Christian I will be expected to preach and I cannot do it—I have tried." Then came to him the thought Satan was tempting him; "but no," he reasoned, "Satan would not want me to preach and win people from his influence; this impression of duty must be from the Lord, and it will be several years before I will be expected to preach; I can improve my time in preparing; I will do the Lord's will now." So saying, he went forward, although jeered at by many of the boys near him; reaching the place of prayer he knelt with others and earnestly asked the Saviour for "a new heart." Soon a peace came to him such as he enjoyed before asking his mother's permission to accept baptism.

Between the mother and son, consecrated to a common service, a new bond of love came into existence; not in their own alone but in each other's joy they felt an untold happiness. While but little was said by either, that which was uppermost in their thoughts was expressed in ways well understood by each other, and enjoyed—but as yet not comprehended—by other members of the family. Having united

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with Mr. Vinton's church, his frequent visits in their home not only encouraged Mrs. Seely and Walter in their Christian life, but others of the household and neighborhood were charmed by his genial manners and drawn to his public ministry.

CHAPTER IX.

FARM HOUSE PLEASURES.

To Walter the change in character and aim in life brought more kindness in word and act toward family and schoolmate friends, without detracting from his love of sport—harmless in itself—which had always characterized him, and which any boy may engage in and yet be a Christian. It is a mistaken notion that country life is one of dull monotony, void of pleasure. No finer fun is found—none less harmful than that enjoyed by child life on the farm. Who that has shared it can forget their childhood among the fowls and flocks; the pleasures of the field; sliding down the stacks; “Easter egg hiding,” and melon time; the “breaking of the colts” and “yoking up the calves;” ball games, kite flying and skating? The broad pond back of Mr. Seely’s barn was a veritable “inland sea,” upon which his boys made many a voyage in an Indian “dug out” Edward had procured from a hunter in exchange for a gun. After the thaws and spring rains, when the pond was full to its highest “water mark,” Walter and Martin, with a couple of visiting neighbor boys, were rowing across the smooth surface, while Rover was running along the shore, barking loudly in response to their calls. Eager to reach them, true to his spaniel nature, the dog plunged into the water and swam rapidly toward the canoe. Without a suspicion of danger, the boys laughed and loudly beckoned him on. Reaching the side of the boat, he raised his head from the water. Then he suddenly threw his forefeet over the side and tipped the boys headlong into the pond. Grasping the sides of the boat, they partly swam and floated to wading depth and reached the shore wetter and wiser lads; but Rover had no “standing invitation” to accompany them on their future voyages.

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When the frosty days of autumn came Mrs. Seely was careful that the boys were clad in comfort. Walter had the promise of a new pair of mittens, knit by his mother from yarn spun by her on the old family spinning wheel; hurrying home from school he found his mother busily engaged "thumbing off" the last one; pushing his hands into them, he proudly displayed them to his brothers as they entered the door. Edward, then a robust youth, proposed that Walter assist him in "breaking" one of the young steers—already familiar with the yoke—so they could ride him. Eager for the fun, Walter hastened to the crib to fill his arms with ears of corn with which to coax the intended "steed" into docility while Edward mounted. Reaching the barn yard the young ox, familiar with the boys, came quickly forward for an ear of corn. Proud of his new mittens and the comfort they afforded him, Walter extended an ear of corn to the animal just as Edward sprang upon his back. With protruding tongue, he drew the ear of corn and Walter's hand into his mouth; springing from under his rider, with a deep bellow, he ran away dragging Walter after him, who, screaming with fright and pain, drew his hand out of the steer's mouth, leaving his mitten and the ear of corn to be chewed and swallowed together, while he, through blinding tears, looked on, in sorrowful indignation over the loss of his new mitten before it had hardly been shaped and warmed by his hand. Later, Walter and Martin decided to utilize the strength of this same young ox as a propelling power, independent of yoke or saddle. Drawing the rope of their hand sled through the loop they made by securely knotting the hair on his tail, then bringing the knotted end of the rope back and grasping it with his hand, Walter seated himself on the sled with Martin behind. Using a long cornstalk for a whip, he started the steer across the barnyard. No doubt astonished at the new attachment to his own caudle appendage he turned his head to one side, then the other; each glance backward increased his fright; quickening his walk into a trot, he left the herd and stacks of straw and fodder and started across the wide pasture; the boys were in high glee, fancying themselves young esquimaux with sled and

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reindeer, such as they had seen pictured in their books. Glancing ahead Walter saw in the line of their course a wide patch of grassy hummocks covered with ice and snow. To avoid a collision with these he let go his hold upon the knotted rope, expecting to see it slip through the loop on the animal's tail as smoothly as an anchor chain glides through the hole in the side of a ship, drawn by the sinking anchor. But alas! the knot caught in the hair of the tail of the steer; with a sudden jerk he left Martin sitting in the snow; a little farther on the sled collided with a hummock, whirling Walter headlong from his seat and sending the sled, to the rope's length, into the air and descending upon the animal's back. With a bellowing bound the now thoroughly frightened runaway, unchecked by bridle or driver, started afresh at right angles to his former course, the boys in hot pursuit, to save, if possible, their cherished sled. Again and again the sled was flung into the air by contact with a hummock or trampled under hoofs until it was so completely demolished that not enough clung together to longer frighten the victim of a boyish prank; reaching the most distant fence corner he turned and gazed, in big-eyed terror, at his pursuers, meanwhile panting vigorously and using his long, rough tongue as a handkerchief to wipe the drops of perspiration from his cold nose.

In former days the rural sports of childhood were mostly those provided by conditions and things out of doors; the blasts of winter and the fragrant winds of summer made them strong of lungs and lithe of limb. Christmas and other anniversary days were playful times, rather than occasions for the lavish bestowment of gifts. Christmas trees were all but unknown to Mr. Seely's children. Santa Claus, however was a veritable "deity" to Walter and Martin; for had they not been convinced of his reality from the day their father posted upon the kitchen wall an immense picture of him and his sled full of toys, drawn by eight tiny reindeers, which had been sent as a premium with the New York Tribune? It puzzled their little heads to decide how so fat a person could come down so small a chimney and past the elbows, through smoke and fire, but they

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concluded anyone could do that who could drive a team of rein-deers up the side of the house and through the air if need be. Then, were not their stockings, hung up empty Christmas eve and found next morning full of popcorn and big red apples and sticks of striped candy, with now and then a toy? In their ignorance and simple gifts they found bliss untold, until Walter—one Christmas morning, awakened by his father calling Edward to his early morning work—hastily dressed and descending to the sitting room found the *real* Santa Claus filling the stockings hanging to the mantle. He shouted in triumph over his discovery, only to feel sorely crestfallen when laughingly told “there would be no more stockings filled, now that the secret about Santa Claus was discovered.”

If the boys found pleasure in their sport, their folly oftentimes brought its own punishment. In his apron wearing days in the red house Walter's bent for mischief led him to approach a hive of bees with a long, sharp pointed pole, which he thrust into the entrance, thinking himself safe from the bees and their stings at the distance of the pole's length. Very soon, however, his loud screams brought his mother to the rescue; not without many stings herself, she threw her skirts around him; rushing into the house and quickly closing doors and windows to keep out the infuriated pursuers, she bathed him freely in a strong solution of soda, which neutralized the acid poison of the stings; then, with a fine toothed comb, she literally combed the stingers from Walter's head and hands, leaving no serious results. Ever after, while shy of the busy workers, he still retained a fondness for their gathered sweets.

Stored in the pantry cellar way his mother kept her “cards” of honey, charging the boys not to take it without permission. Passing it one day in her absence, the temptation to break off a small projecting piece was more than Walter could resist. Hastily putting it in his mouth, he gave a cry of pain as he felt, upon the inside of his lip, the sharp sting of a bee, hidden in one of the cells. His mother's expected return filled him with deep concern, for how could he hide the increasing size of his swollen lip—proof of his act of disobedience? The rumbling wheels

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at the gate told of her arrival. With the milk pails upon his arms which John, the hired man, had asked him to bring to the barn, he met his mother in the path. At a glance she saw his swollen lip; with true motherly solicitude she inquired the cause. His evasive answer led to a closer examination and the discovery of the reason; but with a slight reproof she dismissed him, saying:

“For this time your disobedience has brought its own punishment, Walter!”

The impression of the incident and its lesson never left his memory.

What farmer's child has not felt the ecstatic joy of looking upon a litter of young puppies or kittens—even though the girls felt a trembling fear lest their brothers harden their hearts and drown them? How delightful the labor of scattering food for the downy chicks, or watching the fluffy little ducks follow their mother, like animated bubbles, floating on the water! The flock of goslings, while fully as attractive, were more secure from childish handling, as the sturdy gander or the mother goose, with deep-toned “honk, honk,” or protruding neck, hissed their warnings.

Here again Walter became the victim of misjudged security when he caught a gosling near the barn that had become separated from the rest. Holding it close to his face to soothe its cries and feel its soft down upon his cheek, his first warning was a swish of wings and the mother goose was upon his stooping back; grasping a mouthful of hair in her saw-edged bill with angry cries she belabored him furiously on head and shoulders with her wings; in vain he dropped his captive; in vain he screamed and tried to escape by running. His mad rider held her place, lashing him with unabated fury as he ran about the yard, until a lucky tumble cast him headlong on the ground and his tormentor was dislodged; away she ran with noisy calls, gathering together her scattering brood.

Not to the young alone, with care-free, buoyant spirits, but likewise to

“Men, who work from sun to sun,”

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and

“Women, whose work is never done,” in the farm home or field, comes pleasure and respite from toil—glad hours of recreation, homely pastimes—when the burden is laid aside and well earned freedom and rest from labor are enjoyed.

Not always sportive pleasure alone was the motive for gatherings in the farm house parlors or dining rooms!

Some sick mother, with unfinished sewing and winter near, explained the clicking knitting needles and the garments being made or the quiltings in the hands of the assembled bands of sympathizing women—mothers themselves—doubly glad and blessed themselves by blessing others.

Again, a farmer, victim of an accident, anchored to his bed with a broken limb, looking through the window of his sick room, across his fields of ripening grain or unhusked corn, sadly sighs as he thinks of the loss he will sustain, because unable to reap the fruit of his seed sowing.

A new sense of gratitude for human kindness comes to him, as he looks again and listens to the shouts of cheerful harvesters—as a procession stops before his door—neighbors who have come to harvest his grain or husk his corn.

Who can measure the benefits to old and young of that unique rural function—the “farmer’s picnic?” Long anticipated and prepared for; richly enjoyed in neighborly greetings and social feastings; long remembered as a sunburst of pleasure through a cloud of toil and care.

More of such recreations will avert the increasing insanity among farmer’s wives and hold the farmer’s sons and daughters to the farm.

Recreation that is not rest from labor—a preparation for new work waiting to be performed—is a waste of time and energy. The pleasures of the farm home are therefore of that character—sandwiched as they are between days of toil—they may be considered as working capital—the oiling of the machinery of life, without which the machine itself would ere long break down.

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Thus, amid the pleasures of the farm, childhood passes into youth—youth in turn ripening into maturity and old age.

The frequent letters from Rosamond were filled with cheering words of happiness; mention of new acquaintances and friendships; her husband's kindness and attentions, all of which prevented homesickness and removed the feelings of strangeness in her new surroundings.

Even among the new found friends, however, her abode was not to be for long in the sunny South. His new business near Chicago called Clarence Farnsworth northward, there to find a home for Rosamond within a day's journey of the scenes of her childhood.

CHAPTER X.

WAR.

Mr. Seely came from Lockwood one evening just after a national election. Having eaten his supper, he took up the newspaper and began to read aloud to Mrs. Seely and the boys. After reading the column of "local items" his eyes rested upon the word "SECESSION," printed in large letters at the head of a column.

As he read it aloud, Walter asked what the word meant. His father was about to explain the meaning, when he remembered a dictionary had been purchased with the new school library. He knew it would do the boys good to look up the word. He told Edward to bring the dictionary from the bookcase. Opening it upon the table he readily found the word "secede" and read: "to withdraw from fellowship." He then found and read the word "secession" and the definition: "the act of seceding."

"But who are going to secede?" asked Edward.

"The southern states where slaves are bought and sold," his father replied.

"Are the slave owners going to withdraw from the union and take their slaves with them?" asked Walter.

"Yes," his father replied; "they want all the states in which slaves are owned to unite and form a separate government and elect a president of their own."

"What is the reason they do not like Mr. Lincoln?" asked Edward.

"Because," said Mr. Seely, "they think he wishes to free the slaves; they do not desire to have slavery put down. They paid a large amount of money for them and they work without

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pay, other than necessary food and clothing; by that means slave owners have become very rich."

"Does Mr. Lincoln think slavery is right?" asked Mrs. Seely.

"He does not," her husband answered. "He has been heard to say in a public speech, 'if slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong;' he is, however, in favor of doing away with it in some way by which the owners can get their money back which they have invested in slaves. Most of those who hold them do not wish anything done that will interfere with slavery; they want the privilege of extending it into other states and territories. Mr. Lincoln is opposed to that and so are those who voted for him and a great many who did not."

"I am afraid it will make trouble in this country," said Mrs. Seely.

"If the slave states do secede and bring on war many lives will be lost and much property be destroyed," remarked Edward thoughtfully; "but," he added, "I think I would like to be a soldier. I learned to drill last summer in the torchlight companies."

"Well, my son," his mother said with a sigh, "I hope you will not be required to be a soldier. It seems dreadful just to think of men going to war and killing each other."

Every day that followed the papers contained something more about "secession." Edward overheard some men telling his father—when they were in Lockwood with a load of wheat—"the war has commenced in the South; a company of soldiers will be formed at once in Lockwood and another in Juliet." They asked Mr. Seely if Edward could enlist. He did not hear what his father said in reply to their question about him; when he reached home he told his mother what the men had said and asked if she was willing he should become a soldier.

In reply, she said, "We will wait and see; perhaps you will not be needed, Edward."

When she returned from another room, where she had gone after their conversation, Edward observed her eyes were red from weeping.

The next day, after they came from the field and were pre-

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paring for dinner, a farmer, coming from town, was reading a newspaper as his horses walked slowly along the dusty road.

“What are the news, neighbor?” asked Mr. Seely, loud enough to arouse the man’s attention.

Looking up from his paper and stopping his horses he replied: “Just had a big battle; the northern soldiers have been defeated; the President has called for several thousand more soldiers; I think I shall go for one; there is to be a public meeting in Lockwood tonight. I am going and you and Edward better go over also.

When seated at the dinner table Mr. Seely and his wife said but little; the boys, however, especially Walter and Martin, were very much excited. Walter wondered if they would accept him as a drummer boy.

After Edward had returned to his work and the younger boys had gone to the garden to weed onions, Mrs. Seely asked her husband if Edward had said anything to him about enlisting.

“Not yet,” he answered, “but I expect if he goes with me tonight and sees that other young men are enlisting he will want to do the same. I wish to do my duty to my country, but it does seem as if I could not spare him just now; however, he will soon be of age; then if the war continues he will go anyhow; I would rather have him go with my full consent, feeling I am ready to do anything I can to save the Union. If I was a few years younger I would go myself.

“I have decided—as John does not wish to go, but will remain and work for me—if Edward wishes to enlist, I will not oppose him, if you are willing.”

“I am willing to do my duty,” said Mrs. Seely, very much agitated; “but I feel if he goes to the war I shall never see him again.”

Lockwood was all astir that night; Edward and his father heard the sound of martial music as they drew near the town.

A gentleman in uniform spoke at the public meeting in the hall, urging all who loved their country to “rally round the flag.” The people cheered loud and long, whereupon several

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young men went forward and signed their names as volunteers; Edward turned to his father and asked his consent to do the same. Consent was given, and with his friend, Harry Channing, he signed as others had done.

Mr. Seely knew his son's good habits and suffered no fear of his falling into evil ways.

Anxious to have her children together once more Mrs. Seely wrote to Rosamond the next day asking her to come home and remain until after Edward had gone South with his regiment.

Her coming was an occasion of joy to them all; the more so because they were all desirous of seeing her little babe. For a time they almost forgot the sad parting that must take place in a few days.

Edward, dressed in his new uniform, spent all the time at home that he could be allowed away from camp, where the soldiers spent most of each day in drilling—learning how to march and handle their swords and guns.

As most of them had learned many different steps and movements while they belonged to the torchlight companies, they were soon ready and anxious—with an anxiety born of ignorance of real war and bloodshed—to go to the front.

When the day arrived for them to leave, a multitude of people—relatives and friends—went to the camp to bid them goodbye.

The regiment was formed in line—each soldier wearing his uniform and equipments; after marching and maneuvering for an hour, to the great admiration of the people, who frequently expressed their feelings in cheers and clapping of hands, a lady, accompanied by others bearing a beautiful flag, came before the regiment; after a brief address, commending their bravery and assuring them of the love and prayers that would follow them, she presented the flag to them. The commanding officer, alighting from the splendid black horse he rode, in behalf of the regiment accepted the flag and thanked the ladies and their friends for the gift.

Although many eyes were filled with tears and many voices choked with sobs, three loud cheers were given by the soldiers,

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after which they returned to their tents and spent the remainder of the day visiting with their friends.

As Mrs. Seely turned away, having bidden Edward a last goodbye and pressed a lingering kiss upon his cheek, she saw a young soldier standing alone, as if he was a stranger to everyone. Extending her hand she spoke to him.

He told her he had no friends there to bid him goodbye; his father was dead, his mother far away. Mrs. Seely shook hands with him again and said, "Let me kiss you for your mother."

Tears filled the young man's eyes as he thanked her for her kindness and went into his tent.

Rosamond, with her babe, returned to her husband a few days after Edward and his comrades had gone from Juliet.

The war was the special theme upon which every one conversed.

Walter, who had always taken special interest in reading the histories of battles whenever they occurred in his studies, now trembled as he read about them with a new and intensified interest; they seemed so much more terrible now as he thought of Edward being engaged in similar conflicts, shot and shell flying all about him, men falling on every side, either killed or wounded.

Mrs. Seely would always heave a sigh of relief after reading an account of a battle when Edward's name was not among the injured. He had been gone from home a year, during which time his mother had written him many letters and sent many tokens of affection.

CHAPTER XI.

SORROW.

Having returned from a visit to a sick sister in Chicago, Mrs. Seely, on the same evening, went to the school house where Mr. Vinton was to preach again. After the service he accompanied Mrs. Seely and family to their home for entertainment for the night; he engaged the entire family present, to a late hour, in a religious conversation that proved very profitable to them all.

When Walter took the light to show Mr. Vinton the room where he was to sleep the minister held him by the hand and tenderly conversed with him about his Christian life. Walter felt as he bade him good night that if he ever became a minister he would like to be such a one as Mr. Vinton.

It was only two days later that Mrs. Seely requested Walter to remain home from school and assist her, as she was feeling very ill.

During the day Mr. Seely went for Aunt Carrie and called the physician to prescribe for his wife, who pronounced her very sick.

When Sunday came Walter and Martin quite reluctantly left their mother to attend Sunday school; but she requested them to go and not miss their lesson, assuring them she expected to recover soon. A deep sadness filled their minds. To a classmate Walter expressed a fear that his mother was to be taken from him; he hastened home as soon as the school was dismissed. When he and Martin entered the sick room of their mother they saw through the open door the family physician and two others talking with their father in low whispers in an adjoining room. Walter overheard the physicians saying "she is past our help and can live only a few hours."

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It seemed to him a great weight had been suddenly laid upon his heart. He went to the bedside where his mother was lying; she took his hand in hers and asked if he had enjoyed the Sunday school. He was about to tell her that he had not as he was so anxious about her he could not think of his lesson, but at that instant his father came into the bedroom; Mrs. Seely inquired what the physicians had said about her case.

"They think you are very sick," Mr. Seely replied.

"Do they think I can recover?" she asked. As Mr. Seely hesitated in answering her, she said calmly: "Do not hesitate to tell me, Sanford; I am not afraid to die. I think the Lord called me to His service last winter, that I might be ready for this hour; now, if He sees best to take me, I am ready and willing to go. I would like to know how long the physicians think I can live."

Seeing her so calm, Mr. Seely told her there remained only a few hours for her to live; anything she would like to say to him or her friends must be spoken soon, that they might do all in their power to fulfill her wishes.

Remaining quite for a little time, as if in prayer, she said: "I would like to live for the sake of my family and the good I might do in the world, for it seems I have only just begun to live—but the Lord knows best!

"Poor Edward! he is so far away and in so much danger; he writes that my letters are his greatest comfort; now he will have that comfort no more."

After a few moments silence she said: "I feared I should not see him again, but I thought it would be him and not me who would be taken. Write to him often; tell him mother remembered him to the last;—and Rosamond! Oh, if I could but see her and her dear child once more, I would be glad! Can she reach me while I live?"

"It is Sunday," said Mr. Seely; "the cars do not run today; the quickest way to reach her will be to send John across the country with the horses and carriage; it is a long distance, but he need not spare the team only so he reaches her and returns in time for her to talk with you."

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Word was sent to John at the barn to prepare for the journey; when he was ready Mr. Seely called Aunt Carrie, asking her to remain with his wife while he gave John instructions about his journey and urged him to drive with all possible speed; if, on arrival, Rosamond and her husband could come quicker by train than by returning with him, they were to do so.

The physicians remained a short time; then, as nothing more remained which they could do for the comfort or recovery of Mrs. Seely, they went their way to visit other patients.

Approaching night shadowed the home. The boys, wearied with their long walk to Sunday school, were urged by Aunt Carrie to go to their room and rest; if their mother grew suddenly worse she was to call them. Walter was even more weary than his walk to Sunday school had made him; the physician had prescribed wine as a stimulant for his mother; to procure it he went to a neighbor's half a mile away. As he walked homeward in the darkness the odor of the wine reminded him of the "sling" John had given him years before, which he had relished so keenly; now the desire to taste it became so strong he could scarcely refrain from taking the cork from the bottle in his hand and drinking some of the contents; then he thought "how wicked it would be to indulge such a desire—that, too, when my mother is so ill and needs the wine for medicine."

He was ashamed, indeed, at his own thoughts; then, knowing it was a temptation from the Wicked One, he lifted his heart in prayer and the desire was gone in an instant.

Reaching his home he gave the wine into his Aunt Carrie's hands and stepped softly to the door of his mother's sick room; for several minutes he gazed upon her face as she lay quietly sleeping; then, going to his room, he knelt and tearfully prayed God to give his mother a peaceful death. He knew she had become a Christian, but he longed to know if that would take away all fear in a dying moment. He then prayed for his father and brothers and Rosamond's family. He asked the Lord especially to give him strength and wisdom to be a true Christian after his mother was gone.

As he prayed his heart was filled with peace; the very air

Sorrow

seemed filled with soft, sweet music. Lying upon his bed he soon fell into a deep sleep, from which he and Martin were soon awakened to come to their mother's room. As they entered the door they were startled by the change apparent in her face. Reaching her hand toward Martin she said:

"Come, my baby boy, let mother wipe away your tears;" drawing him closely to her heart she clung to the sobbing child until Aunt Carrie came and led him from the room with the imprint of his mother's last kiss upon his cheeks.

As Walter approached the bedside, his fortitude, for a moment, forsook him; but as his mother put her arms around his neck she spoke such words of comfort to him he soon became calm and talked with her.

She assured him she felt no fear; that "the Christian has a peace in the dying hour that is indescribable." He tried to tell her of his sorrow for all the pain and trouble he had caused her; she interrupted him by saying, "it is all forgiven and forgotten;" drawing him very near to her, so his cheek rested upon her cold forehead, she added, in tender tones: "Walter, be a good boy; live for God; do all the good you can in the world; try and bring many with you and meet mother in heaven."

Next she bade Mr. Seely, Aunt Carrie and others present goodbye—giving each a parting word. Again sending her last wishes to Rosamond and Edward—she folded her hands across her breast, closed her eyes and adjusted her head to her pillow, as if about to fall asleep—as indeed she was—"asleep in Jesus"—and her spirit gradually took its flight. The calm face remained as if she was sleeping sweetly. All was silence for a moment in the room; grief was hushed, as if in contemplation of the peaceful triumph of her departure—while through the open window the clock in the church spire in Lockwood was heard tolling the hour of midnight—midnight indeed to the sorrowing ones near her, whose ransomed spirit had entered the brightness of "high noon" in heaven.

CHAPTER XII.

SAD TIDINGS.

On through the darkness, John, who had left Mr. Seely's house at sunset, was speeding his way rapidly as the horses could travel, that Rosamond might once more hear her mother's voice. Alas! of no avail was speed now.

Rosamond was not aware as yet even of her mother's illness. So sudden had been the attack the hope of recovery had deterred Mr. Seely from writing, until after hope had become hopeless, then no message could reach her before the end came. Rosamond had been quietly sleeping that Sunday night, with her babe upon her arm. Suddenly her husband was awakened by her restless movings and broken sobs.

"Rosamond! Rosamond!" he called; "what is the trouble; are you sick?"

Awakened from her sleep she exclaimed, in tears: "I fear some one is sick at home or Edward has been killed in battle. I feel so unspeakably sad."

With cheering words her husband soothed her fears and both soon fell asleep, only to be awakened again—just as the day was breaking—by the ringing of the door bell. Hastily dressing Clarence answered the call. Opening the door John entered, his coat damp with the night dew.

"What is it, John?" asked Clarence. "Tell me quickly. Is anyone sick at home? Is Edward killed or wounded?"

Through the open bedroom door Rosamond heard John saying:

"It's bad noos I hav' fer yees and Rosamond, shure an' it is, Misther Fairnswort; an' Misther Saly said as how yees should cum on the fust thrain, if yees can git thar quicker than wid me; the horses are purty well fagged."

Sad Tidings

“But, John,” called Rosamond, “you have not told what is the trouble.”

“Faith and o’im sorry to till the loikes of yees, Rosamond; may the saints presairve us,” said John, crossing himself, “but Missus Saly is very bad, and the docthors say as how she can’t get no bether, an’ yees are to cum home roight away, for yur mother wants to spake wid yees.”

With a great fear upon her heart Rosamond arose and quickly dressed, while Clarence went with John to stable and feed the badly jaded horses.

Returning to the house, he found, by consulting the time table of the railroad guide, that no train would pass for several hours; therefore, to fulfill their anxious longings they must needs return with John. Long and weary was the journey. The sun was low when they entered Mr. Seely’s yard.

Only too well the sad countenances of one and another who came to meet the new arrivals told—more plainly than words could tell—of the sad bereavement that had befallen them.

In the cemetery at Lockwood, by the side of Rosalie, Mrs. Seely was laid to rest.

“It is I, be not afraid,” were the words Mr. Vinton chose from which to draw the funeral lesson of consolation—showing that “under the cloud of death and sorrow—upon every sea of trouble—the Saviour walks, to scatter fears, calm the tempests and give us peace.”

As soon as possible, Rosamond wrote a full account of their mother’s sickness and death and mailed it to Edward.

With eager eyes and radiant expectations thousands of soldiers stood waiting, watching the mail steamer as it wended its way along the winding channel of a southern river.

As it touched the wharf in front of the camp the cry, “mail, mail,” went up from thousands of lips. One and another at the head of the long lines of soldiers received their letters, packages or papers and turned away to scan their contents; or, obtaining no reminder of home and loved ones far away, stepped dejectedly aside, while those behind moved steadily forward. Edward’s turn will soon come. He is unusually eager for the

Chronicles of a Farm House

last mail did not bring him his “weekly letter from mother.” His name was called and he extended his hand to receive his letters, but oh! among them one bordered and sealed with black, addressed in Rosamond’s handwriting!

“Poor Rosamond!” surmised Edward, “this will tell the sorrow of her heart, bereft, no doubt, of that sweet babe on whose face we all enjoyed so much to look.”

He had held the little one in his arms and fondly kissed her when he bade Rosamond and their mother the last lingering farewell at the camp in Juliet.

Still he waited for other mail. “That is all, Edward!” said his comrades with voices filled with sympathy as they saw the dark-draped letter in his hand.

“What, no letter from mother?” he asked, and turned with doubting hesitancy toward his tent.

Shouts and laughter greeted his ears on all sides as he passed along. Some were shedding tears—but tears of joy—over the glad messages from home. Some, again, were sitting in deep dejection and disappointment, unable to rise above them on the waves of joy about them.

Not until he had entered his tent, where his comrade—Henry Laurens—was enjoying the perusal of a late paper filled with “home news”—did Edward venture to unseal his letters, then he opened them one by one and read their contents. At last, taking the one with the somber seal and border, in his hand, he said, turning to his comrade, “Henry, I dread to open this!”

“Who is it from?” asked Henry.

“It is addressed in Rosamond’s writing, but this is the second week with no letter from mother. Rosamond is at father’s, for the postmark is Lockwood,” he answered; slowly opening the seal he removed the letter—also bordered with black—and began to read:

“My Dear Brother Edward.

How can I tell you, that, instead of mother’s welcome letter to you this week, mine must bear to you the sad tidings that our dear mother has been called from us.”

He could read no farther. The greatest sorrow of his life

Sad Tidings

swept against and over him as the waves dash against the ship in a storm; he could not endure the stroke it seemed to him; he could not escape it; overwhelmed with grief he prostrated himself upon the blankets in his berth. The source from whence came his sweetest earthly comfort and encouragement—she whom he last thought of when entering the crash of battle, whose name was on his lips as he looked up at the stars from his bed upon the ground—she was gone. Before him still lay all the dangers of war and coming battles, with whatever of suffering or sorrow they might plunge him into and she was not in the old farm home to send him cheering messages.

Unable to read more—after a time he handed the letter to Henry, requesting him to read the remainder aloud to him.

The first shock was the worst—that was the battery's "broad-side;" what followed was but the narrative of the severe attack of disease and its sudden termination in his mother's death; a recital of the peaceful, joyful dying moments—his mother's fond farewell—her tender remembrances and messages to him.

When the reading was finished, Edward, chastened but calm and greatly comforted by the reading, thanked Henry, who, rising from his camp stool, went from the tent leaving Edward to himself. Slowly there came that healing to his wounded heart which only time can affect.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO HARVESTS.

The busy season of the year was drawing nigh; in a few days Mr. Seely's house would be filled with workmen assisting him in harvesting. Aunt Carrie—as everyone came to call her who formed her acquaintance—feeling a genuine sympathy for her brother and his motherless boys, cheerfully complied with his request to come, with her two young daughters, and make their home with him until such time as Rosamond and her husband could come and live again in the home of her childhood and youth.

When these arrangements had been completed, Rosamond and her husband returned to their own home. As the train bore them rapidly away from the depot in Lockwood, Rosamond turned her gaze toward the cemetery, hoping to catch a last glimpse of the place where her mother was calmly sleeping. The hills, however, hid the spot from view, and she turned her tearful eyes toward her little one nestling in her arms, inwardly hoping it might be her privilege to live and guard and guide the child's unfolding life, that she might be to this one all her own mother had been to her.

When the train rounded a curve in the distance and passed out of sight Mr. Seely untied his horses, taking Aunt Carrie and her girls into the carriage he drove with them to her little home. Having procured such articles as they required, a hasty drive soon brought them to the farm.

While passing through the streets of Lockwood, Mr. Seely heard someone loudly calling him by name; stopping his team, a man—just emerging from a saloon—inquired if he had commenced harvesting.

“I expect to begin next Monday,” was the reply.

“What wages will you pay?” was asked.

The Two Harvests

“Three dollars and a half a day, with board and lodging,” Mr. Seely answered—and added, “during these war times wages are high, because men are scarce; but farmers who are getting two and three dollars a bushel for wheat can afford to pay good wages.”

“I would like to work for you, Mr. Seely,” said the man; “some farmers will pay only two dollars and a half a day and what liquor we want. You will furnish that, of course?”

“No sir, I will not furnish liquor,” said Mr. Seely, with decided emphasis; “what is more, I will not allow any man to bring it onto the farm.”

The man’s bloated face colored even more deeply red than usual at this reply, and he said:

“You cannot get men to work for you on those conditions, Mr. Seely; what is more, it would not be safe to work in the hot sun without stimulants; we would get ‘sunstroke.’ ”

“Men will be all the more apt to get ‘sunstroke’ if they have their stomachs and veins full of fire while the hot sun is beating down upon them,” said Mr. Seely. “What is more,” he added, “if I cannot get any other help I will hire women.”

“Yes,” said Aunt Carrie, smiling, “I can drive the reaper. What a pity,” she added, as the man turned and went into the saloon and Mr. Seely started homeward, “that men will hang around such places; it does not make any difference how much they earn as long as they drink and frequent such resorts. Their families get no benefit from their earnings and they save nothing. I am acquainted with that man’s wife; they have several children; she takes in washing to earn money to feed and clothe them. They have but little in their house; he has broken the furniture and dishes when he was intoxicated. They had a good start when they were married, but he has squandered it all. If it was not for his habits and the influence of the saloons and taverns he could be a prosperous man and make his family comfortable and happy.”

As they entered the farmyard gate, Mr. Seely said, “I do not know who is most to blame, the men who make and sell liquor or those who drink it.”

Chronicles of a Farm House

When Mr. Seely began his harvesting, with the help of his neighbors, he succeeded in getting his grain cut and bound in bundles, which Walter and Martin—who were having vacation—carried together in piles for the men to set up in long shocks.

Each day Aunt Carrie prepared a large pail of flour porridge or corn meal gruel, cooling it with a big piece of ice from the ice house on the farm, which the boys carried to the men between breakfast and dinner, as had been done in Mrs. Seely's lifetime, when her husband began to withhold whiskey and rum from his harvesters. The men enjoyed it and all agreed they felt better for drinking it than they did when they drank alcoholic stimulants in the field.

During the wheat harvest Mr. Seely received several letters from Edward, in which he made frequent reference to his mother, which deeply touched his father's heart.

He gave a long description of a battle in which he had just been engaged. "I was thinking of you," he wrote. "When the battle was raging fiercest and men were falling in every direction, either killed or wounded, it reminded me that you were busy harvesting your wheat, which fell before the sickle, while we were engaged in a harvest of death. I must tell you of a very narrow escape which I had. The battle was fought near Murfreesboro; our forces were under the command of General Rosecrans. Our regiment—which, you know, is the 100th Illinois—was supporting a battery which was being fired over us at the enemy, as we lay upon the ground. You may depend we hugged the earth as closely as possible—even wished we were worms so we could crawl into it.

"A comrade from Lockwood, lying at my left, was shot in the arm by a rebel bullet; he crept back between the cannon, and reached the rear, where the surgeons dressed his wound. I felt strangely impressed to change my position, and occupy the spot he had vacated. I did so, and the man on my right came where I had been lying; a moment later a shell from a rebel battery burst over us; a piece struck him on the head, killing him instantly.



THE TWO HARVESTS
(See Page 88)

(Courtesy International Harvester Co.)

The Two Harvests

"I cannot understand why he was taken and I so narrowly escaped.

"Several of the boys from Lockwood were either killed or wounded, but I am safe and sound, enjoying splendid health. I have been promoted, so my duties will be different, but whatever they may be, I will try and discharge them faithfully. I have never once regretted having offered my service and life to my country."

When the harvesting was over, Mr. Seely gave the boys permission to spend a few days visiting and hunting with their cousin, who lived in the woods beyond Lockwood.

The long rambles among the trees—the whir-r- of partridges—so like the rising sound of prairie chickens so common among the grass and stubble on the prairie farms; the chipmunks—chattering and running along the fallen logs—reminding them of the striped gophers on the prairies, which the boys would chase into their holes in the ground, then, pouring water in after them, catching them as they came out to breathe, they were taken home and trained for pets; the squirrels, hopped from branch to branch, defying the boys unsteady aim, until they were lost to view among the thick foliage or hidden away in their holes in the trees—these, and scores of other interesting sights and sounds, to which Walter and Martin were unaccustomed on the almost boundless prairies with their shadeless sunlight and unobstructed view, made their visit in the woods days never to be forgotten.

Weary of hunting, the boys were taught by their cousin to climb slender saplings; swinging off their feet while clinging fast with their hands the tops would bend until the feet of the boys would touch the ground; letting go with their hands the trees would spring back to a perpendicular position.

Seeing one more slender and tall than any that had been climbed, Walter hastily ascended to the highest branch on which he could stand. Not being familiar enough with the trees of the forest to know the different qualities of wood and choose only the springy hickory saplings his cousin would have selected, he swung himself off with a shout to attract the atten-

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tion of the other boys; the tree bent over slightly—suddenly the brittle top of the young *ash* snapped off like a pipe stem and Walter fell the entire distance—a score of feet—to the ground.

With a cry of alarm his cousin ran to his assistance. After his first feeling of astonishment and fright were over, Walter sprang to his feet with neither bruise nor broken bones.

“You prairie simpleton!” exclaimed his cousin, when he saw he was unhurt, “don’t you know an ash from a hickory?” at which Walter joined the other boys in a hearty laugh at his own ignorance.

Returning to their home with many trophies of their visit in the woods, the boys rehearsed their various experiences to the eager listeners gathered about them.

In thinking of the birds and squirrels they had killed while hunting with their cousin, Walter felt a pang of regret lest some young squirrels or nests of birds had been bereft of a mother’s care. Of late his sympathies toward all forms of animal life had been growing more tender. As he wandered through the fields in search of wild game the thought would come to him over and over, “I am wounding or taking the life of these innocent and defenseless creatures.”

Having one day killed a beautiful bird—which had a yellow breast and mottled plumage—its mate flew about the place and called in plaintive notes for its companion. Its expression of distress and alarm so affected Walter he ceased from that time forth to take delight in his favorite pastime.

The incident of the solitary bird flying disconsolately away caused him to feel that to some degree it would suffer the sense of loneliness he had experienced shortly after his mother’s death—ere the fact of her absence had become fixed in his mind.

Coming into the house from work or play or school, calling her to tell her something or ask a question—as he had been accustomed to do—the echo of his own voice would fall upon his ears and ring through the rooms, where he had so often found her, ready to listen to his requests.

Often had his heart been made to ache and his tears to flow.

The Two Harvests

At such times Aunt Carrie would come to him, to find him alone with his face upon the floor—weeping bitterly. Knowing the cause of his grief—having heard his voice calling his mother—she would whisper in his ears such words of cheer and comfort as seldom failed to inspire him with a courageous and patient spirit like her own.

“Do you think, Aunt Carrie,” he once asked her, “that our friends who leave this world, see us and know what we say and do?”

She replied by requesting him to get his Testament. When, by her direction, he had turned to Matt. 22:30, he read: “For in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”

“In that verse you see, Walter,” said Aunt Carrie, “the condition of those who have left this world and gone to heaven.

“Now turn to Hebrews 1:14, and you will learn what they are doing.” Finding the place, Walter read: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

He then read Matt. 19:10: “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

“Do you believe you are an heir of salvation, Walter?” asked Aunt Carrie.

“I do,” was his reply, “because the things I once loved I now hate.”

“Well, then, if our friends who are in heaven, are ‘as the angels,’ ” said Aunt Carrie, “they must be employed as the angels are; it seems from what you have just read that one duty of the angels is to stand in the presence of God—that is, behold Him—hear His commands—then, though unseen by us, in some blessed manner influence us for good.”

“Then you think,” said Walter, “we are not alone by night or day—that the angels are near us all the time, also our friends, who ‘are as the angels,’ although we cannot see them?”

“I think the Bible teaches it very plainly,” said Aunt Carrie.

Chronicles of a Farm House

“I am glad to hear it,” said Walter, “for I do not think I shall feel so lonely as I have.”

The conversation not only made a comforting impression on Walter's mind, it also served to restrain him from participating in many mischievous sports which his mother had taught him were not right. His answer to those who asked his co-operation in questionable doings was: “If my mother were to look from heaven and see me do wrong, she would be grieved,” which often led to their abandoning their projects, rather than undertake them without his presence and help.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIAL AND REUNION.

A temptation, however, such as Walter had never met, came to him in a manner so sudden and unexpected that he not only failed to resist it, but yielded to a degree that filled him with shame and sorrow as soon as it was over.

A young man, much older than he, visiting at his father's, was walking with him along the streets in Lockwood.

Suddenly stopping in front of a place with screens before the doors and windows, the young man took Walter by the arm and hurried him in before he could make any inquiries or offer objections. Once inside, Walter knew it was a saloon. All his mother's teachings, all the warnings he had heard against entering such places, came rushing into his mind. He stood dumb-founded for a moment—gazing at the pictures on the walls; some represented prize fights; others illustrated horse races or gaudy women improperly dressed. There were tables and chairs standing about.

Across the end of the room, opposite the door, was a counter and shelves filled with bottles. The room was full of tobacco smoke and other vile odors. Behind the counter stood a fine-looking young man, smoothly shaved and well dressed, wearing a white apron and with a cigar in his mouth. Several men had evidently been there and gone away recently.

The young man with Walter stepped up to the counter or bar and asked the man wearing the apron to give him a glass of brandy. He drank it, then called for a glass of wine for Walter and urged him to drink it. He refused—for it seemed to him he could see his mother's face between him and the glass to keep him from drinking. In vain he protested; the young man urged it upon him—even putting it to his lips until he

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tasted the—so-called—wine. The fiery liquid burned his mouth and throat, stifling his breath; grasping a glass of water from the counter he drank its contents. The others only laughed, as they saw his frightened looks.

When Walter and his companion stepped out upon the sidewalk, they glanced both ways to discover if anyone they knew saw them coming from the place.

Walter inwardly despised himself for remaining inside one minute, as much as he blamed the young man for forcing him in. The only response the young man made to his protests against the whole affair was the remark, "Pshaw! that is nothing; I am used to such places in Chicago."

The feeling that he had taken a step toward ruin alarmed Walter. The thought that he had disgraced his Christian profession filled his heart with a true spirit of repentance. It was the first, and he firmly resolved it should be the last time his feet should ever enter a saloon for any such purpose.

He charged the young man not to tell his folks at home, reasoning that if they did not know it, and he never repeated the act, no harm could come of it.

Many things the young man told Walter, during their walk to the farm, which he had not known before—wicked, vile things, of which the young man acknowledged himself and others guilty.

"You are green," he said to Walter; "if you lived in Chicago, where I do, you would get your eyes opened," then he laughed as he observed Walter's look of astonishment.

"One thing is sure," said Walter, "I do not wish to live in a city if I would have to see and do such things as you have described; but I think there must be some good people living in cities and I do not think there is any need of people doing as you have done."

Walter felt inclined to tell Martin his afternoon's adventure after they had retired that night, but he feared to do so. Martin had seen several drunken men and had a horror of those who drank or entered saloons, therefore he kept the secret to himself, confident no one in the family would discover or hear of it.

Trials and Reunions

Great was his surprise the next afternoon when Aunt Carrie—who had been to Lockwood with Mr. Seely that morning—said to him: “I feel very sad, Walter, on account of something I heard today.”

“What was it you heard, Aunt Carrie?” he asked, about to make a full confession which she interrupted by saying:

“I heard you went into a saloon in Lockwood and drank a glass of wine; I cannot express my sorrowful surprise at the report, nor will I believe it, unless you say it is true.”

“Yes, Aunt Carrie,” said Walter, “I did go into a saloon with Mr. Shoals. He all but forced me to drink something he called wine—I took but a sip of the fiery stuff and it nearly strangled me. I felt like death when I found myself inside a saloon. It seemed as if mother’s spirit was right before me. I am more sorry than words can tell, for, however wrong Mr. Shoals did in leading me in and urging me to drink, I did not do right in yielding. While I did not intend telling you, fearing it would make you sad, I am glad you know it and spoke in your kindness to me.”

Aunt Carrie’s eyes were moist with tears, as Walter finished his frank confession; he discerned the depth and sincerity of her love for him, and how greatly what she had heard about him alarmed her. He did not care to know who informed her; it was sufficient that she knew the facts, and still gave him her confidence, and that sympathy he so longed for.

Autumn returned again and the beginning once more of school in the white school house, which Martin continued to attend, while Walter entered the high school in Lockwood.

Aunt Carrie and her daughters returned to their home; Rosamond and her family came back to the old homestead, giving Martin a home with them, while Mr. Seely planned to travel and visit for a time, his friends in the East, and enjoy once more—after many years—the scenes of his boyhood.

Time had somewhat healed the wound which Rosamond had suffered when she had entered the old home—so shrouded with grief—a few months before; still the absence of the familiar face and the greetings of her mother’s cheerful voice, opened afresh the fountain of her tears.

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The winter's snows had just begun to fall when a Sabbath day saw gathered around their family board Rosamond and Clarence with their two children—for a baby boy had come to add care and gladness to their home—also Martin—and Walter who had come from Lockwood for the Sabbath, before their father started on his journey. Their joy would have been complete but for the vacant places—mother's and Rosalie's—these to remain forever vacant—the other waiting—with a shadow of uncertainty across it—for Edward's return.

The presence of Rosamond's children was to the boys an exciting novelty; there seemed no end to their delight. The oldest soon exacted a large share of their attention in childish sports, while her broken speech and curious pranks were an hourly source of amusement.

Mr. Seely sportively complained of a sense of rapidly increasing decrepitude, since the venerable title of "Grandfather" had been conferred upon him. Rosamond thought, however, she discovered rather a renewal of his youth, as he playfully indulged the liberties childish fingers were wont to take with his wavy hair and beard.

"Never such humorings," Rosamond declared, "did I know or experience when a child." The boys were surprised to see that their father had so far recovered from his rheumatism as to play "bear back" with his little granddaughter, as he—on "all fours"—bore her on his back about the room. They had years before ceased asking for indulgence in that delightful sport on account of his growing infirmity.

When Monday came, so loth was the family to separate, a week of absence from school was granted the boys and their father postponed his journey. During the week John brought home from the postoffice a newspaper. Hastily opening it, Mr. Seely read aloud: "A most terrific battle at Chickamauga; thousands killed, wounded or prisoners; the enemy defeated."

Reading down the column—to ascertain what troops were engaged—he soon learned that Edward's regiment was mentioned; the colonel had lost an arm; many whose names were familiar were among the killed or wounded, but Edward's name

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was not found in either list; reading the names of those “missing” or “prisoners” his eyes fell on Edward’s. But, was he missing and dead or was he wounded and a prisoner? No more could be learned. Hoping against hope, they waited—in keenest suspense—the arrival of tidings concerning him.

CHAPTER XV.

DOOMED ISSUES AND CUSTOMS.

Since Rosamond's return her former friends and neighbors had made her frequent friendly visits. The evening following the news of the battle just referred to, Mr. Steele and his wife from an adjoining farm called to spend a social hour.

After the usual greetings were over, Rosamond engaged Mrs. Steele in conversation relative to domestic matters, while Mr. Seely and Clarence Farnsworth conversed with Mr. Steele; one of whose sons had enlisted in Edward's regiment. His father objected to his entering the army, being opposed, as he was, to the issues in defense of which his son was sworn to do battle. Mr. Steele and his wife were still more embittered in their feelings because their son had fallen an early victim to the hardships of the camp and march.

On the occasion of this visit conversation gradually turned toward the great issues before the country, growing out of the causes and probable results of the war.

"It has ceased to be a war," said Mr. Steele, "to suppress the rebellion and save the Union; it is being waged for the purpose of abolishing an institution older than the government itself and as essential to the prosperity of the South and the well-being of the country as the air we breathe."

"But," asked Mr. Seely, "was the war begun for that purpose by those who are opposed, as you say, 'to this old institution,' or was it begun by them at all?"

"Perhaps not," said Mr. Steele, after a moment's reflection.

"Then," Mr. Seely asked, "if not begun by them, and not entered into originally for the purpose of abolishing the institution of slavery, why this war? By whom was it begun and for what purpose?"

Doomed Issues and Customs

Seeing Mr. Steele hesitated to answer, he resumed, by saying: "If the opponents of slavery did not begin the war, then the friends of slavery must have begun it; *they did fire the first gun*. If the opponents of slavery had threatened its existence by resorting to armed force it would have been because the friends of the institution demanded first, that it be not molested, and second, that it be defended by the whole nation and its extension be allowed into other states and territories? Are not these two ideas the main causes that have incited the friends of slavery in their course of action?"

"But," said Mr. Steele, "has not the President proclaimed the slaves free? Is not the war continued under his authority to enforce his proclamation?"

"Very true," answered Mr. Seely; "because the issues forced upon the country by the friends of slavery—now in arms for its protection—is simply this: their victory means the maintenance and possible—although not probable—extension of slavery. The enforcement of the 'Proclamation of Emancipation'—made at this late day in the progress of the strife as an imperative 'war measure'—means the defeat of the friends of slavery, also the preservation of the Union and the removal forever from our midst, of an institution that could never be less in proportions and disturbing influence; but which must continue to increase if allowed to exist.

"I can but feel the friends of slavery, by bringing on this crisis, plainly illustrate the maxim, 'whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.' But think for one moment, Mr. Steele, of the blessings freedom will bring to the four millions of people now in bondage!"

"They will not make a right use of their freedom; they are not capable of being any higher than they are," said Mr. Steele, bitterly.

"Tut, tut," retorted Mr. Seely, in a tone of mild resentment.

"Does not the experience of the few who have obtained their freedom in various ways, possessing no better faculties than those not yet free from the yoke and its direful influences, go to prove the colored man *can* rise in the scale of moral, mental,

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commercial and social development? Is it not the fault of the institution rather than of the individuals that they are what they are?"

"Do you believe, Mr. Seely," asked Mr. Steele, "that slavery—if abolished—can be kept suppressed in all sections of the country?"

"Have we not prevented it in the free states and territories? Has not England prevented it since slavery was abolished in the British dominion?" replied Mr. Seely, and added: "You may rest assured, sir, when this war ends—although that may not be until millions more of money have been spent and thousands more of noble lives have been sacrificed—slavery will be so dead in this country there will not be one dark hand uplifted with a shackle on it; and further," he continued, as an expression of deep anxiety passed over his countenance, "although tonight I am oppressed with feelings of deepest solicitude for Edward, who was among the missing after the late terrible battle, I would rather he remain on a Southern battlefield and Walter and Martin join him, than that slavery be not abolished ere this war closes."

"But," asked Mr. Steele, "what will the Southern people do if the slaves are freed and the wealth they represent is lost?"

"What will the people of the South do?" repeated Mr. Seely, and answered, "they will have to do just as we in the North have done—and prospered thereby—they will have to work, and teach their sons and daughters to work, as we do ours. They may have to work side by side—in the house and in the field—with their *hired* help as we do, if they cannot afford to live without work. Their false ideas of the dignity of labor must be corrected, and their lack of skill be obviated by the cultivation of personal industry.

"The South is not more needy nor less capable than the North. The South is not less highly favored in natural resources than we of the North—indeed, their climate is favorable to all and many more products than our own.

"While they are not more avaricious than we are, it is their great misfortune that their avarice has led them to exercise

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their power over a weaker race, to profit by their unrequited service, instead of developing the skill and intelligence of all classes of people, as we have done.

“Should this war result in putting an end to slavery in this country—as it surely will, Mr. Steele—I predict it will not be over a score or two of years before the South shall have rallied from the immediate effects of the war—and their industries will vie with ours; their school system and college instruction will equal the best, and the colored race will rise in the scale of development, on an equal footing with the white population.”

“Would you be in favor of paying the South for their slaves?” inquired Mr. Steele.

“I studied on that question considerably before the war began,” said Mr. Seely.

“Sometimes I almost concluded that if slavery was abolished—inasmuch as the general government favored or permitted it—and men have been encouraged to invest their wealth in slaves—the owners should be paid for their loss; or, that after a certain date, all children born of slave mothers should be born to freedom and remain free. Why, sir, the free states alone might better have bought and paid gold for all the slaves and set them free than to have suffered the loss of life and wealth the war will cost us.

“The slave states, on the other hand, would have saved immensely by setting their slaves free—without compensation, rather than have forced war upon the country; now they will undoubtedly lose their slaves and suffer their share of the consequence of this long and bloody struggle.

“Inasmuch, however, as they have violated the laws of the general government that had so long protected their ‘peculiar institution,’ I hold—what seems to me every candid person will admit—they forfeited their claims—if such they in justice ever had—to any and all remuneration. That they will receive no compensation appears from the fact that slaves were not held in the interest of the government, but as their private property, and must suffer the fate of all private property or

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public possessions lost in an attempt to overthrow the government.

“Do you think it is just, Mr. Steele, that one class of men—and that the minority—should profit by the weakness or misfortune of others, as slave owners and those who manufacture and sell intoxicating beverages are doing?” asked Clarence Farnsworth, who was as deeply concerned in the latter part of his question as Mr. Steele and his father-in-law had been in the former.

“By no means,” Mr. Steele replied, slowly, as he saw the digression and force of the question Clarence had propounded.

“But,” he added, “when a custom has become so thoroughly established as slavery has, it is very difficult to change it. I acknowledge, Mr. Seely’s arguments seem unanswerable, relative to it, and the present issue bids fair to result as he predicts.”

“Yes,” added Mrs. Steele—who, with Rosamond had been deeply interested in the latter part of this conversation—“and I hope it will come to pass very soon and this cruel war be over, for I do not feel I can spare another son. My poor boy lies tonight sleeping his last, long sleep, far from those who loved him.”

After the departure of Mr. Steele and his wife, Mr. Seely planned an early journey to Juliet on the following morning to ascertain, if possible, further particulars concerning Edward.

Hearing of a wounded soldier who had just been brought home, Mr. Seely went to him and learned that he was wounded while standing near Edward in the line of battle. They heard a shout and looked about and discovered that they were being surrounded by the enemy. Edward had only time enough to hand him his watch, saying, “take it to my father, if you ever see him”—when he and several others were ordered, at the point of the bayonet, to lay down their arms and surrender; they were marched away as prisoners, leaving their wounded comrade on the ground, and they saw each other no more.

Taking Edward’s watch from a box on the table beside him, the soldier handed it to Mr. Seely, who, taking it in his hand,

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gazed at it for some moments in silence. His thoughts were far away—his feelings too deep for utterance.

At length, rousing from his reveries,—thanking the soldier heartily for his information and kindness to Edward, Mr. Seely asked where he supposed he was taken.

“It is impossible to tell,” was the reply, “but you will probably hear directly from him in a few days.”

The prediction proved true, for a letter was received from Edward, stating he was well, and, although the rations were limited and very poor, the men could live on them for a few days, then they expected to be exchanged or paroled.

Comforted in the knowledge that he was alive and in good health, Mr. Seely and his family lived in daily expectation of welcoming him home again.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHANGES AND CROSSES.

While pursuing his studies in Lockwood high school Walter had many opportunities of meeting Mr. Vinton and enjoyed the privilege of attending church and Sunday school.

His visits with Aunt Carrie were frequent, while Saturdays often found him wending his way to the farm home for a few hours pleasure with Rosamond and her children or assisting Clarence in his farm work.

Professor Herford's splendid instructions inspired his best endeavors, supplementing the impression of his father's parting words as he left the farm to begin his school work in Lockwood:

"Do your best, my son; remember how hard we have worked to earn the money that will be expended in your education."

The aimless indifference of many of his classmates filled Walter with surprise. Intermissions were scenes of busy discussion of the last sleigh ride or planning for the next party. He was occasionally invited; but, discovering how unfitted he was for study, by the late hours, he soon began to decline their invitations. His plain clothes were also the cause of slighting remarks, but he comforted himself with the remark his mother had often made in her counsels, "Clothes do not make a true gentleman or lady. Character is what we are; reputation is only what people think of us; hence a reputation —of being a lady or gentleman—based on fine clothes, would end when the clothes were worn out; but if we have a true character and a good education, we will never lack good friends and will get on successfully in the world."

In one of his Sunday evening sermons to young men, Mr. Vinton said: "The habits you form before you are twenty-one years old will largely influence you ever after." Although

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Walter had passed only his fifteenth birthday, his pastor's remark led his mind forward to his twenty-first year, and he resolved to be more careful than ever, to improve his time and form right habits. He was very much encouraged when Mr. Vinton remarked that "most of the ministers, doctors, lawyers, teachers and prominent business men spent the first fifteen years of their life on farms, working or attending country schools in the day time and improving their evenings mostly in reading and study.

Walter overheard some young men behind him saying, "We don't care if they did; we are not 'hayseeds;' we are not going to put our eyes out by sitting up nights, studying by candle light." Many in the congregation looked at each other in astonishment when Mr. Vinton said, with great emphasis: "I greatly fear were it not for the young men and women who are coming from the farms to fill professional places and conduct commercial enterprises, our country would be threatened with a danger greater than the war that is now in progress." He described his own home on a farm among the hills of New England, and paid an affectionate tribute to the memory of his sainted mother.

When Walter learned the following day that his teachers had come from farm homes, and were admired for their genteel manners as well as for their character and scholarship, he concluded he, too, in time would so improve in manners and personal appearance that his classmates would not sneer at him for his country ways. To him it was a disappointment and sorrow that so few of his schoolmates were Christians. He had hoped to find among the boys some who would join him in forming a praying band. On the contrary, he was critized by them, after making a public prayer, as having "made it up beforehand and repeated it from memory." Not so, however, for his daily communion with his Unseen Friend in secret, qualified him to "confess Him" by calling on His name in public.

His Bible was a part of his daily reading and a source of delight. He was made more careful in his reading when he recalled the beautiful motto in the Sunday school room—

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printed in colors and golden letters: "WHEREWITHAL SHALL A YOUNG MAN CLEANSE HIS WAY? BY TAKING HEED THERETO ACCORDING TO THY WORD."—Psalm 119, 9.

Claude Sharon became an exception to the many boys in the high school, and in time Walter's most intimate friend.

At the beginning of the term they were strangers. When Walter saw him smoking a cigar he did not wish to be intimate with him. Learning, however, that his parents were not living—he had no sister nor known relative, his only brother having gone away and not returned—his sympathies were enlisted, and they frequently spent an evening in each other's room. At such times Claude preferred to converse upon religious themes and read good books.

In him Walter felt he should find a true Christian friend and soon his expectations were realized. As the springtime came, they often walked to the cemetery. On one occasion Walter's heart was unusually full of peace and happiness, while Claude appeared sad and lonely. They visited the sacred places where their mothers were at rest. There Walter expressed his belief that his mother's spirit waited in heaven for his coming—he should meet her again.

"I have no such hope," said Claude; "I wish I had your joy and experience, Walter."

"You need not have mine, Claude," Walter replied, as they sat down on a shaded knoll; "you may have a joyful experience of your own; it may be even more full than mine has been; it is for you and you are freely invited to obtain it as soon as you will."

"But I am not a Christian, Walter!" Claude replied, "and my life has been so full of evil things, as well as sad ones, I fear I can never be good and happy. I have lived and worked in many places since my parents died when I was three years old, but I have not had what could be called 'a home.' My companions have often been wicked and profane and I have fallen in with their evil ways. I heard Mr. Vinton's sermon to young men. I thought, by some things he said, he meant me. I am a year older than you and my habits have clung to me so long,

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I fear I shall not escape from them before I am twenty; my future will be like my past has been; but oh! Walter, I do not wish to live as I have been living. Will you pray for me, that I may live a better life?"

His voice was broken and his eyes were filled with tears. Together they knelt upon the green grass. Walter prayed long and earnestly for his young friend. With an audible response from Claude, they arose from their knees; observing that the sun was about to set they retraced their steps to Claude's room to spend the night together.

After devoting a portion of the evening to the study of the Bible, they conversed far into the night upon the topic uppermost in their minds. Claude firmly resolved to turn from his evil habits and associates, praying daily, for strength to keep his newly formed resolutions.

The change in his conduct was soon observed by the family with whom he lived, also by his schoolmates and teachers.

His buoyant disposition, while less hilarious, still found expressions in vivacious merriment, but all coarseness—all profane vulgarity was being refined away; his laughter was not an effort to subdue the strivings of a guilty conscience—as he had confessed to Walter it had often been—but rather the outburst of a mind at rest, conscious that it had something worth laughing for. He was a frequenter and favorite at dancing parties when Walter first met him. They consumed much of his time and what money he earned, aside from that necessary for his board, clothing and school books.

Walter argued with him concerning the amusement of dancing until he became satisfied if he would become a happy, useful Christian he must discontinue the practice.

In him Walter saw the captivating influence of dancing in the almost regretful look upon his face when declining an invitation from his young friends to attend a party with them.

When alone with Walter he would sometimes shuffle or dance a few steps to some tune he would sing or whistle—then, checking himself with a laugh, he would say, "I declare, I don't believe my feet are thoroughly converted yet."

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"Perhaps," said Walter; "but the best way to break up bad habits is to form good ones; the Bible says, 'overcome evil with good,' and, 'where sin did abound, grace shall much more abound.'"

"To escape bad associates and their influence, choose only those who will be helpful, until you are strong enough to win the erring, instead of being overcome by them."

"Have I not done so already? Have I not given up nearly all the other boys and stuck to you like a tick?" said Claude, laughingly.

"Yes, but what I mean is," said Walter, "if you have fully decided to live a Christian life, why not unite with some church—Mr. Vinton's or Mr. Palmer's? You will then have the help of a great many, which will be vastly better than I can do for you alone."

"Don't you think a person can be a Christian and not unite with a church?" asked Claude.

"There are some Christians who are not connected with a church, I presume," Walter answered; "but if a person does not love Christians well enough to unite with them in order to help them and be helped by them, in worshiping God and doing good, he cannot be a very devoted Christian; do you think so?"

"I think I would prefer to have my daily life show that I am a Christian," Claude half objected.

"Will an open profession and uniting with a church prevent your life showing your professions are genuine?" asked Walter; "you certainly are not afraid to confess your Saviour before the world?"

Beginning to fear Claude was trying to be a Christian and keep the fact from all the boys but him, he said:

"If you do not let others know you are a Christian, I fear it will not be long until you will not know it yourself. When I was converted I loved everyone, but especially Christians, and desired their company above all others; instead of waiting I wished to unite with Mr. Vinton's church at once. Then I began to fear lest I might be tempted and fall away, thus dis-

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gracing myself and the church. But one night I met Mr. Harrison, who teaches the young men's class; I told him how I felt; he convinced me of my mistake, showing me plainly it was Satan's device; by keeping me away from the help and influence of the church I would be more easily led into evil ways. Taking my hand in his, as he lifted his eyes toward the starlit skies, he said: 'Walter, let us both make a new covenant now and here to live true Christian lives; as we stand beneath those beautiful stars, may the angels in heaven witness our covenant.' I united with the church soon after; my heart was filled with faith and courage, nor have I been tempted once to wish I had not assumed the solemn vows of the church."

Claude promised to think and pray over the matter; the next Sunday, after Mr. Vinton had finished preaching, he went forward, giving his name and requesting baptism at the next communion.

CHAPTER XVII.

SELF-DENIAL OR DEFEAT.

In their confidential talks Claude had confessed to Walter that several times he had been intoxicated, and had a passionate fondness for cigars—Walter having observed the latter statement as true from what he had seen.

He, in turn, told Claude of his experience with Mr. Shoals; also how in the days before his father refused to have intoxicating beverages used on the farm, he acquired a great fondness for anything that contained the taste of alcohol, while tobacco in any form was offensive to him. He related his first and only attempt to smoke a cigar, in company with half a dozen others of his own age. It made him deathly sick.

“I promised the Lord,” he said, half laughing, “if He would only spare my life that time, I would never smoke again. My vow remains unbroken.”

“I wish my first cigar had affected me that way,” said Claude.

During the winter a temperance society was organized in Lockwood. Walter and Claude attended the first meeting.

When the “pledge” was read, forbidding the use of sweet cider, they both hesitated to sign it, as did many others.

“What harm can there be in drinking *sweet* cider?” was asked, one gentleman saying, “I am drinking it three times a day and some days more often, on my physician’s recommendation.” All agreed that *hard* cider was neither safe nor so enjoyable as a beverage.

“But,” said one—the owner of a large orchard—“I shall not know what to do with all my cider apples if I sign this pledge.”

“Well,” said Walter—who was the youngest person present—“I do not care enough about drinking it to refuse to sign the pledge; I do not see as the pledge can be divided and the cider

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clause left out, or a privileged class be admitted to the society, just to accommodate a few of us."

"You would all admit," said the lecturer, "the pledge is none too strong could you have witnessed and heard what I have as the result of drinking even sweet cider."

"Please explain," said a lady present, "and possibly we shall all feel differently about the matter."

To the request he replied, by saying:

"When I was lecturing in a certain town a man came forward and signed the pledge. After the meeting was over he came to my room at the hotel and told me a part of his history. He had been well educated, possessing a large fortune left him by his father. He married an excellent girl and they were enjoying life in an elegant home, with their three beautiful children. He formed the habit of drinking a social glass; at length his appetite craved a more frequent indulgence. He became an inebriate, squandered his property, beggared and neglected his family.

"Through the prayers and influence of his Christian wife, he was reformed and converted to a Christian life. Prosperity began to return and the blight on his life and happiness seemed about removed. One day, however, he was invited to dine with a friend in the country—the owner of a large orchard and a cider mill. He was invited to drink cider—*just from the press*—with his friend. He did so, not suspecting that any harm would follow, but it aroused his appetite for stronger beverages. Returning home, he went to a saloon and drank brandy and beer until dead drunk. Unable to control himself—breaking through all the restraints of family, religion, society and business—he soon became a common drunkard."

"But," inquired the lady again, "how was it possible for the cider to arouse his appetite?"

"I see our friend, Dr. Leonard, is present with us," said the lecturer; "as he is an excellent chemist and physiologist, he can answer your question better than I."

Dr. Leonard was indeed a scholar and skillful physician, but unfortunately had become so addicted to the use of strong

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drink his business was ruined. Hoping to obtain some encouragement and help in battling against his appetite, he had come to the meeting. Being thus called upon, he arose in his place and said:

“But few people, unused to it, know the power of appetite for strong drink when once formed—how hard to overcome, how easily aroused. The odor or taste of alcohol would at once pass from the desire and memory of most healthy, temperate people, while they would cause an inebriate to long for it, hence it takes but a very mild form of alcohol to arouse his dormant passion. Cider, after being made, begins very soon to generate alcohol. While its presence might not be detected by a person with a healthy appetite the condition or taste of another, vitiated by the excessive use of alcohol, would detect its presence or perhaps *associate* it with the very act of drinking even sweet cider, and FEEL the AWAKENING POWER OF A SLUMBERING DEMON OVERCOMING the weakness of his will and bodily condition.”

The Doctor spoke with great emphasis when he uttered the last sentence or two, as if he was then wrestling with a strong and cruel monster, which had, on slight provocation, attacked him again and again.

The lady made no reply, so the lecturer arose and said:

“We owe it as a Christian duty to the weak to deny ourselves a luxury that would be a temptation to them. In one case I knew a man who signed this pledge, which I read in your hearing, then turned his extensive cider works into a vinegar factory. Another made his cider into jell; both found ready and profitable markets for their products. They did it because they saw their boys were becoming dissipated by drinking cider in various stages of fermentation.”

To Walter the discussion gave unthought-of reasons why he should sign the “ironclad pledge,” as some present styled it. He had frequently gone with Martin to Mr. Steele’s to procure cider for the men, who were husking his father’s corn, to drink evenings. To this Mr. Seely offered no objections, he, with others, considering it a harmless beverage.

When bringing the cider home in the black jug—which had

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served so many purposes for the family—the boys would often stop on their way and regale themselves from its contents. They called it “collecting express charges.” Great was their glee, as they laughed and wrestled around the jug, nor did it enter their minds that harm would come to them or others from drinking what the jug contained. After listening to Dr. Leonard, Walter recalled an incident that followed the bringing of the last cider from Mr. Steele’s. He remembered it did not have that rich, soft taste it possessed when first made, but rather produced a sharp, prickly sensation in his throat. He remembered also hearing the men say it was getting “hard.”

Clarence Farnsworth, who had been on the farm but a short time, drank freely of it—helping himself repeatedly, after the men had retired and Walter sat reading in another room. On the following day he went to Lockwood—on business, he said. Returning home at a late hour of the day he retired to his room at once, complaining of sickness. At the tea table Rosamond excused his absence, but looked sad and anxious and tears came unbidden to her eyes.

When Walter volunteered to go after the physician she assured him it would be unnecessary—morning would find him better. As all this came rushing through Walter’s mind, since Dr. Leonard’s remarks, he became alarmed lest Clarence’s old appetite had been aroused by drinking the cider he and Martin had brought from Mr. Steele’s. Hoping to do something yet to save him, he hesitated no longer to sign the pledge. Rising in his seat in the audience he said:

“Ladies and gentlemen! I for one like sweet cider, but I fear, from what I have heard tonight, that my love for it—shared with others—has caused me to put temptation in the way of one of my best friends. I fear it will be many days—perhaps years—before he will overcome the effects of it; I feel it my duty—for his sake, as well as my own—to sign that pledge just as it reads.”

Concluding this, his first temperance address, amid the cheers of the people, he proceeded to the platform and signed the pledge. Claude Sharon followed him, and nearly every-

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one present did the same, after which a "Total Abstinence Society" was organized and officers elected.

When the ballot for president was announced, the majority had voted for Walter. In vain he plead his extreme youth and inexperience as a reason for declining.

"You must accept it," said a young lady sitting near him; "feeling as you do, you will work and influence other boys to sign the pledge and unite with our society."

Many hard drinkers and their wives had signed the pledge; among the number were Dr. Leonard and his two young daughters, the light of a new hope shining in their faces.

The society increased rapidly in members and a larger hall was engaged. Walter confidently solicited the presence of Clarence and his father, but the former said, "I fear I cannot keep the pledge," while his father declined to join by saying, "I am a strong temperance man and do not need to sign a pledge to keep from drinking."

Walter was sorely disappointed by their refusals; he wished for his father's presence and strong personal influence. He felt if Clarence would sign the pledge he could be saved from further harm from the cider he brought him. During his brief Christian life Walter had felt as deep a desire for the conversion of his family and kindred as he did at this time that they actively engage in temperance work.

Daily he prayed for them, but the path of duty and method of following it had not yet been made plain regarding them.

To his friend, Mr. Harrison—a blacksmith—he confided his solicitude—while stopping at his shop on his way to the farm at the close of the school week.

"Walter," said Mr. Harrison, as he stood beside his forge and anvil—his sooty arms folded across his breast—"don't you think you have a special duty you ought to perform when you get home tonight?"

"What duty do you mean, Mr. Harrison?" asked Walter.

"I think," he replied, with a smile upon his kindly face, "it would do your relatives good and make you a stronger young soldier of the cross were you to read a chapter in the Bible

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and pray with them night and morning, and at the table ‘ask a blessing.’ I think no piece of furniture is so beautiful and helpful in a home as a ‘family altar.’ I am sure Rosamond would approve and appreciate it.”

Walter hesitated to reply, for the suggestion—which he had not thought of before with any serious intention—it seemed so impractical an idea, so far beyond his strength—now finally fastened itself upon his conscience as an imperative and present duty.

“Think it over as you walk homeward,” continued Mr. Harrison; “pray for strength to do it. I know your father has great confidence in your sincerity—he has told me so.”

Bidding him goodbye, Walter again started on his way. As he came to the river that ran between Lockwood and his home he stopped upon the bridge and looked down into the rushing stream. He thought of what Mr. Harrison had said and felt he ought to do it; but how propose it? If Rosamond would ask him to perform the service, it would be easier, for she was now mistress of the home; he felt sure she would not object, but would his father or Clarence consent? or, if not objecting, would they take pleasure in it? He felt almost displeased with Mr. Harrison for suggesting the duty to him.

After supper was over at home—and he had played awhile with Rosamond’s children before their mother put them in bed—he went out into the yard; he walked among the trees that were just beginning to bud and blossom.

Deeply impressed with a sense of duty also of fear and weakness, he knelt and prayed for strength, and that the minds of the family might be prepared for his proposal. Great was his relief and joy when they each readily consented.

He selected the chapter beginning, “Let not your heart be troubled,” which Mr. Vinton read at the funeral service of his mother; Rosamond remembered it; her tears flowed while Walter read. He knelt and prayed, with a heart overflowing with peace and joy, while the others listened with bowed heads.

As Rosamond bade him good night, with her arms about his

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neck—her eyes still filled with tears—she thanked him for the helpful prayer and reading.

Walter could scarcely fall asleep when he retired, so great was his happiness. He had borne his heaviest cross and found his greatest blessing since becoming a Christian. When next he saw Mr. Harrison, and declared his gratitude for having had his path of duty so plainly marked for him, his friend expressed his pleasure that a duty made known had been performed so promptly, being full of promised good to himself and others.

Mr. Harrison then inquired of Walter if he would like to be a soldier, providing his father would give his consent.

“I would gladly enlist if I was old enough to be accepted and if father is willing,” he replied.

“I will ask him,” said Mr. Harrison; “I am raising a company. Claude and others whom you know are intending to go and we shall be pleased to have you with us.”

With great reluctance, yet constrained by a true spirit of loyalty to his country in her hour of increasing need of men, Mr. Seely consented to Walter’s enlistment.

The hour of parting with him was even sadder to Rosamond and her father than when Edward went to the war. Its dangers and horrors had begun to be but faintly realized then. All were excited and in confident expectation that the struggle would soon be over. Each soldier was eager to experience something of it before it came to an end. Now all was changed. Since Edward went away many noble men had fallen; others had hastened to take their places; still the call came for more.

The best and strongest young men in the North had already gone into the ranks of the Union army. Only those who were very young—mere boys, like Walter—and others past middle life, with families dependent on them, remained to answer to the call.

Walter’s stature was up to the standard of military requirements, although his age—not yet sixteen—was far short of the age limit. His size, however, secured his acceptance and he, with others, was mustered in and marched away.

Edward was still a prisoner of war, languishing in a southern

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prison. Her mother's death; anxious concern on account of the increasing power of strong drink on Clarence; Walter's absence—all combined to fill Rosamond's heart with bitterest sorrow.

"Will I ever see my two absent brothers again?" was a question that filled her mind with gloomy forebodings each time she asked it of herself. Martin alone remained to cheer and help her. Her father was away, having begun his travels about the time Walter left for the seat of war.

To the young soldier this new kind of living was all so strange, at times almost dreamlike, to be away from home; to sleep in a small white tent, so low he must enter it on hands and knees; to sleep, rolled up in rubber and coarse woolen blankets for bed-clothes—the ground for a bedstead, the boom of a cannon at sunrise, to awaken him, or a bugle blast to call him to breakfast; food prepared in large iron kettles and eaten from tin dishes; huge, hard crackers, in place of bread—these were all so novel and unlike home life he could not help enjoying the fascinating change.

Instead of school or farm work after breakfast, if not on the march, the order came for guard duty or exercise in drilling.

The first camp—at the edge of a beautiful city overlooking a broad river—on ground where a terrible battle had been fought a few days before the arrival of his regiment—presented scenes illustrating the ravages of war.

Cannons standing among pyramids of shot and shell; others with broken wheels and otherwise disabled; stately buildings demolished or pierced by shot and shell; long rows of graves, so shallow as to barely cover the dead—these and much more awakened in Walter's young mind a query, "Why men of mature judgment and experience could not come to an amicable understanding and settlement of differences, in a manner more humane—to say nothing of Christian duty.

To him also came another surprise in the conduct of many of his comrades—not only those who were young, like himself—but men of riper years, who, under the guise of social and civil disorder caused by war, justified or at least allowed themselves

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to engage in unwarrantable indulgences with the person and property of men and women, whether friend or foe. Intemperance was all too common among officers and men. Gambling and profanity prevailed on all sides.

Young men, with the beardlessness of boyhood, the imprint of kisses from loving mothers and sisters, hardly gone from their cheeks and lips, he often saw wild with the frenzy of strong drink; he heard them pouring forth torrents of profanity and vile maledictions, until borne away and placed in the guard house, to await courtmartial and punishment.

The next Walter saw of one of these—but little older than himself, with fine form, hair curled and raven black—was before the regiment when on dress parade.

The sun was setting, when a squad marched slowly before the long line of blue, conducting the condemned comrade to an empty barrel standing in the center of the parade ground. The musicians played “the rogues march;” at the word of command he climbed upon the barrel; a ripple of laughter ran along the ranks, bursting into uproarious shouts, when the barrel head gave way and the disgraced soldier sank to his waist in the empty shell, where he was left standing, while his comrades marched back to their quarters.

Walter could not laugh at his comrade’s dishonor. The appearance of the bloodshot eyes and downcast looks touched his heart with pity; he prayed for him that he might never yield to his appetite again.

“Can I stand up against all this temptation?” was the question Walter asked himself often in deep solicitude.

He examined his heart daily. Earnestly he prayed, as he stood alone at the midnight hour on picket duty—alone with his God and his gun—guarding the camp where lay his sleeping comrades. His heart went out for Edward also—far away in prison pen—and for those at home. Leaving the camp one day he strolled into the woods alone; yet, not alone! Winding his way to the depths of a dense thicket he knelt in prayer; he told the Lord of his temptations, weakness and danger.

“Let me die in the camp or on the battlefield, as Thou wilt;

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but while I live, help me to live truly Thine;" such was his prayer. Peace and joy filled his heart; he seemed to be carried out and beyond himself, calm in the assurance that he should return to his home with a reputation and character as untarnished as when he left it.

Returning to the camp, he wrote Rosamond a letter, in which he bade her be brave and keep a cheerful heart, for he believed Edward and he would both live and return to her again.

When, at midnight—after this day so full of rich experience—a sudden attack upon the picket line called the soldiers from their tents, he was surprised but not alarmed; he knew in whom he trusted; nor did he sense aught of fear, as a rolling volley of musketry and the quick words of command brought the various companies, double quick, into regimental line of battle and the attack was repulsed.

Most deeply impressive at the time, an event that lingered longest in his memory was the burial of a comrade. No loved one nigh, to place a flower, or shed a tear. The muffled drum, the slow march to the grave—dug on the hillside in the shadows of the forest—to bear a mark or monument, or to be lost and forgotten, it mattered naught to him whom his comrades left sleeping there—much to someone far away, who would wait in vain his homecoming. To Walter ever came the thought that, however grand its pageantry, or beneficent its results, war is nothing short of a waste of noble life and manhood—a system of murder, legalized by force alone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

COLLEGE AND CALLINGS.

Mr. Seely had returned from his eastern visit. Martin, having completed another year in the district school, was assisting Clarence Farnsworth on the farm.

For many months no tidings had been received from Edward, and grave fears were entertained that he was numbered among the many who had succumbed to the confinement and exposures of prison life.

The summer passed and autumn came. The skies were serene and calm over the beautiful southern land—almost an Eden but for the blight of slavery and the devastations of war.

The frosts of approaching winter were being felt throughout the North, when the regiment to which Walter belonged was ordered to Chicago, to be mustered out of service, the term of enlistment having expired.

Mr. Seely came to meet his son. Bidding his comrades farewell—especially reluctant to leave his captain and the chaplain, who had been exceedingly kind to him—he accompanied his father to Lockwood and the joyful welcome that awaited him at home on the farm.

Rosamond's greeting possessed the warmth of a mother's love—for such she was to him. Her children were delighted with his stories and the toys he brought them.

To Martin he recited some of his experiences as "a soldier boy."

"Did you kill any rebels, Walter?" asked Martin, as if awed with the thought of his brother having been where he held the life or death of others in his hands.

"I hope not, Martin," he replied. "No true soldier wants to know for sure he has caused the death even of an enemy; we

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fought, not to kill, but for victory; to win that, many had to die. While on duty I saw a man crossing the line, contrary to orders; concluding he was one of the many spies that were making us so much trouble I ordered him twice to halt; I leveled my gun at him and called more loudly, *halt*; as he continued moving rapidly and farther away I felt I must fire at him; as I was in good practice and he was moving in a straight line from me—although at long range—I was positive I would kill or wound him. A strange sensation of horror thrilled me; I felt sick at heart; my left arm lost its power and dropped to my side, letting my gun swing on my finger by the trigger guard until the muzzle rested on the ground. Some of my comrades rushed up to take my gun and try to stop the man. That aroused me to my duty and I refused their help; again bracing myself, taking a determined, deadly aim, I cried once more ‘halt’ and was beginning to press the trigger when, moved by some unknown influence, he stopped, threw up his arms, came back to the picket line and surrendered. In the heat of battle, when bullets are flying, and shells shrieking through the air, a soldier seldom knows the effects of the bullets fired from his single gun, hence he is saved the harrowing thought that would haunt him all his life, ‘I have killed a man.’”

“I am glad that rebel surrendered before you shot him,” said Martin.

“Yes, I am also,” remarked Walter, and smiling, added, “it was very kind of him to be so considerate of my lifelong feelings.”

“What do you think of the southern people, my son,” asked Mr. Seely.

“As a whole, they are a hospitable people, father,” Walter answered; “but, of course, those who were friendly to us dared not express their feelings openly and our enemies would not show friendship. Ignorance of themselves and us led them into the war and prejudice will keep them there as long as they can hold out. One could not help pitying them, especially the women and children, reduced from wealth to poverty—plenty to starvation. This generation must suffer, but the next will be the better for it.

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“I must tell you an experience I had in Paducah, Kentucky, which, while it was amusing to our men, seemed very sad to me. An order came from the provost marshal for a detail to be sent to arrest Judge C—— and bring him to headquarters. The detail was to be made from our regiment and my company. I was selected. You can imagine what a formidable appearance I made—my boyish looks, my beardless face—no wonder the officers and men laughed and gayed me as I left the camp and proceeded to the city. Presenting myself at the door of the stately mansion of the Judge—holding my gun in one hand and the order of arrest in the other—I banged the mammoth lion head knocker on the door, which was soon opened by a colored servant. A gray haired, motherly looking woman, resembling Aunt Carrie, appeared.

“Glancing at me, then at my gun, as I asked for the Judge, she became very pale and frightened. ‘What do you want him for?’ she asked with trembling voice, while her eyes were filled with tears. Just then the Judge appeared in the hall. I read the ‘order of arrest’ to him and asked him to prepare at once to go with me. Soon the hall was filled with his family—the colored servants ringing their hands and crying wildly: ‘Oh, for de Lawd’s sake! Massa Judge is you gwine to be hung or shot?’

“He tried patiently to quiet them as best he could; I also assured his wife and the rest that I hardly thought he would be harshly treated.

“The Judge looked at me over his spectacles—holding his newspaper in his hand; his dignified, portly bearing was so in contrast to my youthful appearance he doubtless felt as Goliath did when he saw David coming to fight with him. I detected an amused expression on his face as the Judge exclaimed: ‘Well, youngster! you are rather a young specimen of a soldier to arrest me; but I don’t like the looks of that gun and bayonet; in the hands of *boys* such things go off accidentally sometimes.’

“There is not very much of *me*—in size or age—I admit, your honor,” I replied; “but the whole Federal army and government are back of me and my gun.”

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‘I suppose so,’ he remarked in a sarcastic tone, ‘and you ‘Lincoln hirelings’ will not allow a man to say his name is his own any more.’

“As he called for his hat and cane, I told his wife not to worry, for he could doubtless give bonds for his future appearance and return in a short time.

“Ordering him a few paces in front of me, I marched him down to the office of the provost marshal; many, meeting him on the street, inquired anxiously what it meant, to whom he made various answers indicating that he regarded himself ‘a martyr to the Lincoln government.’”

As the dinner hour was approaching, Rosamond said to Walter: “Are you as fond of chickens as you were before you went into the army? If so, Martin can kill one and I will cook it for dinner.”

“Indeed, I shall enjoy a change from fat meat and hard tack to fried chicken and your good cooking, Rosamond,” Walter replied; “I will take my rifle and show Martin how soldiers shoot rebel roosters.”

Tearing a cartridge open with his teeth, as was done in the army, he poured the powder into the barrel of his gun and drove the bullet down upon it with the ramrod.

On the way to the barn Martin said to him, “Did you get many chickens down South, Walter?”

“Only a few,” he replied; “several of us boys were out foraging and we came to a fine plantation, but found no one there and nothing to eat but a few gnarled apples in the orchard until the rest of them went to the barn, leaving me in the dooryard. Soon I heard the cackling of a hen and the banging of guns, as they chased her around the buildings; she escaped them all and came through the fence where I was standing; I caught her, wrung off her head and dropped her into my haversack just as her pursuers came up to find me calmly waiting for them.

“Where is she, Seely?” they inquired.

“Where is who or what?” I asked in a surprised manner. At that instant one of them saw the head lying on the grass—still gaping and winking—and they made a rush to take the

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game from me; we compromised the matter, however, by my agreeing to dress and cook her and invite them all to supper, on chicken soup, hard tack and apple sauce.

Martin laughed heartily at the incident and pointed out a fine fowl for a test of Walter's marksmanship.

"I must not shoot him through the body with this one ounce rifle ball, or there will be nothing left but his comb and tail feathers," said Walter.

Martin concluded the rebel spy would not have escaped had Walter fired at him, for, when the report of the gun and the powder smoke had passed away, the chicken's head was as cleanly cut from his now fluttering body as if done with a sharp axe.

As the days passed, so full of comfort and pleasure otherwise, Walter could but observe the marked change that had come to Clarence—a change as of one who had been engaged in a severe struggle for mastery over some enemy or danger and had been defeated. Toward Rosamond and the children he manifested no harsh unkindness, but an inattention, born of selfish personal indulgence. Her unheeded cautions when he went to Lockwood—her anxious expression when he returned, told—only too well—she had seen that which gave her just grounds for anxiety.

To Walter he was kind and considerate, promptly encouraging him to resume his custom of prayer and Bible reading in the home circle. Sunday found the horses and carriage at his service to convey Rosamond to church, from which, however, he excused himself on the plea of weariness after the labor of the week—preferring also to care for the children at home. His first-born son—a frail, sweet-mannered boy—was a "shining mark, whom death loved" and called early. The shadows of evening were falling when the end came. Lying in his father's arms his plaintive moans ceased; with a smile of recognition he looked into the faces of those bending over him, then the beautiful house of clay was vacant—the occupant gone to dwell in a fairer home, in a healthier clime. In her grief Rosamond drew near the Saviour and began to know His helpful comfort.

Finding Clarence in his room alone, bitterly weeping, Walter

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said to him: "Do you not believe your child better off in heaven than here?"

"Yes, Walter," he replied, "but it is hard to give him up; harder still to understand why he need be taken from me."

"It may be," said Walter, "the Lord is calling you to Himself and His service by this affliction. He will make it result in your good if you fully trust Him."

"When I try to think one good thought," said Clarence—almost in a tone of despair—"fifty thousand wicked thoughts drive the good one away; I greatly need your prayers, Walter."

The second day following the child's death dawned under heavy clouds, pouring incessant rain upon the earth. The gloomy state of nature added disappointment to the grief of Rosamond and Clarence. Seeing this, Walter went to his room and, remembering the prayer of Elijah, that "it might not rain," he prayed that the clouds might be locked up until the funeral was over.

Three times that morning he entered his secret place of prayer in the same behalf; still the clouds did not pass away—but the rain ceased to fall; nor did it begin again until after the service in the church had afforded all great comfort and the little form had been laid to rest, then—when all were at home again—the clouds melted, rain falling in copious showers far into the night.

Thereby Walter's faith in the ever helpful guiding hand of God in human affairs was greatly strengthened. As he read, "the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and he delighteth in his way," he noted the conditions on which Divine guidance may be expected in small things as well as in greater events in life, and vowed to seek a growth in goodness of heart as he grew in knowledge, years and stature.

As the war was still in progress—more soldiers being called into the field—his inclination to reenlist was very strong; but to his father's twofold counsel he deferred—first, inasmuch as he had shown his loyalty and courage by enlisting once, and as Edward's return was now doubtful, he asked Walter to spare him the heartache of seeing him reenlist unless sternest neces-

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sity required it; then he would make the sacrifice; until then, he counselled him to enter college.

Thus far Walter had revealed to no one—except Aunt Carrie—the line of duty he felt impressed should be his life work—although Rosamond and many Christian friends had surmised it.

Not knowing his father's intentions in thus affording him an opportunity for higher education, he felt it his duty to inform him of his convictions.

It was Sabbath morning; they were walking toward Lockwood to attend church together—a rare occurrence. The late autumn sun gave a tint of gold and crimson to the grass, and flowers and foliage seared by the frost. Occasionally they heard the notes of birds that were still lingering before taking their southern flight. Now and then a cricket—warmed by the sun's rays—had crept upon some faded twig, to sound forth what—seemingly—must have been its funeral dirge. A melancholy—sad, but sweet and peaceful—seemed to pervade the very air. While they were walking leisurely along, Mr. Seely had told Walter some of his plans concerning his college course.

Knowing, as he did, wherein he had come to differ from his father's religious views and experience, he felt it would not be just nor honorable to accept his generous proposals without acquainting him with his sense of duty, hence he said:

“Perhaps, father, you will not wish to do as you propose when I inform you fully what use I wish to make of the education I may acquire.”

“As to that, my son,” his father replied, “I wish you to qualify yourself for some business or profession by which you can earn an ample and honest livelihood. I shall give Rosamond the east farm and buildings for a Christmas gift; if Edward comes back to us, the west farm is to be his. Judging you would prefer an education, and”—with a merry twinkle in his eyes—“you are not ‘cut out’ for a farmer—I will do as much for you in that way as I intend to do for each of them.

“Martin will remain with Clarence and Rosamond; after a few years I will give him an outfit and put him in charge of the

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homestead. I do not fear but you will make a proper use of your privileges."

After walking some distance in silence—with great effort to control his emotions—so heavy a cross was the confession he was about to make—Walter said: "I have felt, father, before, and still more since mother left us, I ought to prepare to preach the gospel. Knowing how much our views on religious questions differ, I have not advised you of it heretofore. I trust, however, my intentions will not displease you."

His suspense was as great while awaiting his father's reply as his surprise and joy were when his father said, with trembling voice and moistened eyes:

"I would rather educate you for a minister, my son, than have you choose a course such as thousands of other young men are pursuing; I will gladly assist you in carrying out your convictions and beliefs."

A new feeling of confidence in and firm reliance upon his father sprang up in Walter's heart then and there such as he had never felt before. He perceived anew that, beneath his father's calm reserve, there existed not only warm paternal feelings, but that he depended on deeds more than on words for the expression of religious convictions. While sitting in church that morning Walter could not prevent his mind wandering from the sermon, on into the future with all its possibilities.

Rosamond entered with a loving ambition into her brother's plans. The great theme—uppermost in his mind—while seldom referred to, was coming to be well understood and approved by her. His presence and daily prayers in her home afforded her large relief from the growing anxiety that preyed upon her mind.

The distance to the college would admit of such frequent returns home, the prospective separation had less of sadness in it.

A mile from Mr. Seely's was the farm house of Mr. Frisbie. His oldest son, Carrol, had been a playmate and intimate companion to Walter since Mr. Seely first moved into the present home. Together they had wandered over the wide prairies—afoot or on horseback—in search of their father's cows. They

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sat in the same seat in school much of the time and recited in the same classes. Each had been occasionally permitted by his parents to spend a night at the other's home, which were always times of great enjoyment, spent in studying lessons, reading or telling stories or riddles, popping corn, cracking nuts and similar diversions.

When Carroll's mother and infant brother died, Walter accompanied his parents to the double funeral, as sympathetic neighbors.

While the procession moved slowly toward the cemetery he cast many glances toward his mother; he trembled as he asked himself the question, "What could I do were she to be taken away as Carroll's mother has been?"

Little he imagined how soon the fear would be a sad reality. It was then Carroll came—among the many—to speak words of sympathy. Entering the room, where Walter was standing alone, extending his hand, he said: "I did not expect, Walter, I should be called upon so soon to offer my sympathies in return for your kindness when the sorrow came to my home that has visited you and yours."

For some time they stood with clasped hands and wept in silence. Each could understand full well how deep was the sorrow of the other, yet by it their hearts were cemented with a more lasting bond of friendship.

It was no small satisfaction to these two motherless boys—just merging into young manhood—when their fathers arranged to send them to college together.

Mounted on their fathers' best saddle horses they rode gayly across the country to the college town of Plainwell—the tall church spires of which could be seen in the distance from Walter's home.

Arriving there they were directed to the home of Mrs. Wellington, to arrange for rooms and board. They found her a cheerful, elderly widow with an only child—a grown daughter—and an adopted girl of fourteen years.

The following week Mr. Seely took the boys and their belongings to Mrs. Wellington's and saw them installed in their

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new surroundings—pleasantly charging their hostess to “watch the boys and keep them out of mischief.”

“You will come home often, Walter,” said Rosamond, while assisting him in packing his trunk. “I shall be so lost without you. When you are away and we sit down at the table it seems as if something was lacking—to eat without a ‘blessing’ being asked. I hope to see the day when Clarence or father will feel it in their hearts to be a duty and pleasure to do so.”

“Yes, Rosamond,” Walter replied, “I shall want to come often. I feel as if I was beginning to break away from the home moorings, to launch upon the sea of life in earnest. I want a snug harbor to anchor in, and I shall always feel—as long as you are here—that I am welcome. I know it will always be safe to steer for the light in this lighthouse.”

Rosamond smiled as Walter finished this nautical figure and locked his trunk, which contained so many tokens of his sister’s love.

The new order of living at Mrs. Wellington’s differed somewhat from Rosamond’s and was full of interest to Walter. So recent had been his army life, he often dreamed of being awakened for “roll call” or “picket duty.” As he awoke and found himself surrounded by tokens of peace and safety he thanked his Heavenly Father and prayed for the soldiers still in the field.

The new school life now offered Walter and his friend, unfolded to the boys wider views of intellectual growth and knowledge than had been presented to them before. The contrast was very great between the country school and the study and recitation of lessons by scores of pupils in the large college building, or the quiet study in their private rooms.

CHAPTER XIX.

COLLEGE AND CALLINGS.—*Continued.*

Walter recalled the college life of many great men, whose biographies he had read, who, struggling against poverty, by dint of will and perseverance, had graduated with honor; rising from obscurity some had won lasting fame as statesmen, authors, divines, or had filled other important places among men. He was thankful to be exempted from the struggle for a livelihood by his father's provision of means, needing, as he did, every hour for study.

He had neither time nor disposition to engage in the escapades and boisterous, unmanly sports of which he had heard or read as being practiced by college boys. Carroll—his roommate—with his high moral sense—looked with the same contempt on rude revelry and waste of time. Upon one subject, however, they differed, as their fathers had differed.

Mr. Frisbie shared the views advanced by Mr. Steele, his neighbor, relative to the war and its issues. He had formed his opinion largely from the literature he had read. Carroll, having read the same to some extent, and listened to his conversation, had adopted his father's opinions—that slavery, as an institution, should not be interfered with by the government, claiming the slaves were an inferior, incapable race, unfit for any other condition. Walter had shared his father's opinions, at first, with possibly no better show of reason than governed Carroll—"like father, like son"—until he entered the army; then he had reasons of his own for his views concerning slavery and the possibilities of the slaves under freedom.

"There," said he to Carroll one evening after study hours, "I saw the emancipated slaves—tens of thousands—men, women and children, all ages and complexions; ebony black or

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with faces white and features so truly Caucasian I could scarcely discern a trace of negro blood. I conversed with many of them; I soon discovered such a longing for freedom among them, I was fired with a determination to fight and die for them, if necessary, if their return to bondage could be prevented only by so doing."

"So great was the desire of the slaves for freedom that they took great risks of being severely punished for trying to escape from bondage.

"Many found their way across the border states to Canada over the "Underground Railway"—a secret society formed to assist slaves to obtain their freedom.

"Your friend, Mr. Hazen, was an agent in Plainwell.

"The escaped slaves would be brought here in the night from some other "station" and kept secretly until Mr. Rogers could take them to Chicago after dark in his covered market wagon, covered over with straw and grain or light vegetables.

"Maud has told me Mr. Wellington was also an agent; often when she woke in the morning she would hear someone moving about in the attic; her mother would tell her some runaway slave, or a black mother and her children who were to be sold away from her and each other over in Missouri or Kentucky had escaped and had been brought in the night to their house; she was solemnly charged not to breathe a word about them at school or to anyone.

"She said she could not keep from crying in sympathy for them as she remembered how she felt when she was left without a mother and was separated from her brother and sister, to be *adopted* here, which was nothing sad, compared with the black children being separated and *sold* to strangers.

"Owen Lovejoy, the celebrated abolitionist, often came to Plainwell to lecture on slavery; he was entertained by Mr. Wellington and his family. So great was their admiration and love for him, Mrs. Wellington named her youngest son Owen Lovejoy.

"If they remain free it will not be long until those who love the negroes so much will want to marry them; they will be scat-

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tered all over the land and the country will be filled with the mixed races; I, for one, do not believe in it," said Carroll, with a considerable display of bitterness in his tone of voice.

"I should regret seeing the races mixed any more than at present, but I think you are mistaken, Carroll," said Walter.

"It will be an easy matter, while making laws to fix the status of the freed slaves, to make a law to prevent the races intermarrying. Here let me ask, can you explain how so many who were lately slaves came to have such light complexions? Were their mother's *married* to white men?"

"Of course not," said Carroll, coloring deeply as the truth flashed upon his mind.

"Well, then," continued Walter, "if they are freed and are made citizens, with laws forbidding intermarriage with the white race, and unchastity be punished, as adultery and licentiousness are—or should be—would not the amalgamation of the races cease?"

"But they are such a degraded, ignorant set," said Carroll, contemptuously.

"Yes. they are; more degraded and ignorant than you realize or I ever imagined until I went South among them," Walter said in reply. "But," he added, "they are simple and sincere; such prayers as I heard them make would melt a heart of stone; their singing—well, I cannot describe it. I soon discovered that through these two channels alone they had received and found means of expressing what little happiness came into their crushed hearts and lives."

"But I do not believe it is right or just to arm them to fight against their former masters," said Carroll; "that is 'adding insult to injury.'"

"That is just what their former masters say," remarked Walter, good naturedly, "but they do make good soldiers, Carroll! Their long subjection made them quick to obey discipline; then they are fighting for themselves. If this war had to be and they are the ones to reap the main benefits, why not let them have a share in the great conflict going on between their white brothers in their behalf?"

College and Callings (Continued)

After a long pause, Walter—seeing with what displeasure Carroll received what he had expressed by way of argument—said to him: “I want to make a proposition.”

“What is it?” asked Carroll, hotly.

“It is this,” said Walter; “you and I do not think alike on political subjects; we have been too good friends to allow any hard words or feelings to come between us; I propose we do not discuss such questions with each other hereafter. What do you say?”

“Agreed,” said Carroll, after a moment’s reflection; he then arose and crossed the room to Walter. They shook hands and during the time they remained at college—and ever after—their attachment remained unchanged; but they discussed no political questions with each other.

The daily intercourse which they enjoyed with learned professors and hundreds of young men and women, incited them to greatest diligence, affording them also certain social privileges they needed.

Like themselves, most of the students were farmers’ sons or daughters, and brought with them a rugged deportment, which the new associations transformed into personal refinement.

“What are you preparing yourself for, Carroll?” Mrs. Wellington inquired of him one evening, while seated at the tea table, and added, “Young men generally have some special object in view when entering college.”

“He looks as though he might become a physician,” remarked Mrs. Wellington’s daughter.

“No,” said Walter, “he could not be a physician; he cannot stand the sight of blood. He was at my home once when mother sent me to the barn to get a fowl for dinner. Carroll caught it and scratched his hand on the rooster’s spur. I put the fowl in a box, then turned to look at Carroll’s wound; there he stood, pale as a ghost and ready to faint. I led him to the house; while mother was assisting me to bathe his head with camphor the chicken got out of the box and ran under the barn, so we had no fowl for dinner.”

“He is what I should call chicken-hearted,” said Maud—

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Mrs. Wellington's adopted daughter—after the laughter that had greeted Walter's remarks had subsided.

"But you have been interrupted in answering my question," said Mrs. Wellington to Carroll.

"My education must be miscellaneous, for general purposes," was his reply, adding, "I shall remain a farmer or engage in mercantile pursuits. If you want a 'professional' for a boarder, Walter will answer that description; he expects to be a minister."

"I am very glad to hear it, Walter," said Mrs. Wellington, "although I supposed you were intending to be a lawyer, as you were a soldier and seem well informed and interested on political questions."

"Before I became a church member I was ambitious to become a lawyer and obtain fame and wealth, but when I became a Christian my mind underwent a complete change," was Walter's simple reply.

"Do you not think a man can be a lawyer and a Christian at the same time?" asked Mrs. Wellington.

"I do not see why he might not," he replied; "but ministers and lawyers work for different ends and use different means. I believe a man is called of God to preach the Gospel and should joyfully obey the call, even at a sacrifice.

"The law has many emoluments which the ministry has not; it also has a great many temptations—especially to skepticism and intemperance."

"I told my son as much when he entered college," said Mrs. Wellington, as an expression of sadness took the place of smiles upon her face. "He was about the age of Carroll and very studious—very ambitious. He was not a professed Christian then, although he became one shortly after entering college. His young friend and roommate—Glenn Hadden—who was working his own way in the world—has since risen to eminence as a lawyer and statesman.

"As I listened to their plans, while they talked of success and greatness, I reminded them that life is uncertain and fame brings great temptations.

"But it was not my son's destiny to reap earthly fame, nor

College and Callings (Continued)

fall before the world's temptations. He soon sank under the strain to which he subjected himself at college. I reached his bedside only in time to receive his parting look of recognition, then brought his remains to be laid where they are quietly resting by the side of his father and brother in our Plainwell cemetery. It was sore grief and disappointment to me, but it—no doubt—is all for the best."

The gathering darkness hid the tears that fell from her eyes, as she finished the sad recital; rising from the table the family followed her from the dining room.

At the chapel services in the college building Walter met many students who had been his comrades in the army. Some had not laid aside all the vivacity of a soldier, nor donned all the garb of a citizen nor the dignity which—in Walter's thought—became a student.

A joke—perpetrated by one of the ex-soldiers upon a fellow student, who had not "donned his country's colors," to Walter's idea would bear comparison with many college boy's tricks of which he had heard or read; while not really hurtful to the victim it was quite amusing to his fellow students. Having never been in a southern climate he was wholly unacquainted with the nature of the persimmon—a fruit indigenous to the South. The ex-soldier brought some home with him, in their green, puckery stage, as mementos of many practical jokes suffered or perpetrated by himself in the army. One of these he gave—with lavish praise of the delicious quality of the ripened fruit—to the student who was about to be his opponent in a debate in the college chapel before the students and faculty. He began to eat the persimmon just as his name was called to open the discussion.

Taking his place upon the platform he tried to speak; so puckered and contorted were his tongue and lips by the bitter morsel he had eaten, he found himself unable to articulate his words. Amid the titterings of the students he stammered out his explanations to the faculty as to the cause of his failure, then retreated from the platform amid a deafening applause, in which even the professors could not refrain from joining.

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The perpetrator of the joke, however, was doomed to meet a speedy and self-imposed retaliation. Appointed by the faculty to deliver an oration at an approaching demonstration, inflated with pride by the honor conferred upon him, he prepared and approached the eventful occasion with perfect confidence. After an introduction by the college president and the burst of applause that greeted his appearance had subsided, he stood speechless for a moment before a breathless audience. By a strange lapse of memory his oration had vanished, leaving his mind a blank. After a few futile efforts to grapple with his subject he rushed from the platform. Hastening to his father's barn he harnessed a horse; hitching him to a carriage he drove to Juliet and did not return for many days to his home and class rooms.

For a few years Walter had suffered the bodily pain and inconvenience of impaired eyesight, which he could but feel was a just retribution for former parental disobedience and violation of nature's laws.

Before entering Sunday school he had taken no interest in Bible reading and the house contained no books interesting him, aside from those he studied, until the trustees purchased the library for the district school near his home.

Until then he and his brothers had recourse to the cheap, sensational literature to be purchased at the news stands in Lockwood—for a few pennies a copy—covered with yellow wrappers and illustrated with numerous cuts of scenes of murder and debauchery.

These Walter read with an absorbing interest, while wild fancies shaped themselves in his boyish mind of feats of daring and bloodshed, of which he was to be the hero. At first, he was advised by his mother to discontinue reading such books—then forbidden. So great was his fascination and the habit of reading so strongly formed that he felt he could not deny himself the pleasure of their perusal; therefore, he took them to the field or barn, reading them when out of sight, or placing them under his pillow would relight his candle after his parents had retired, and read as long as the candle continued to burn or the

College and Callings (Continued)

chapter or book remained unread. At length his eyes yielded to the unnatural strain; his vision became permanently impaired, often requiring the discontinuance of his studies for many consecutive weeks. At such times he bitterly censured himself for his lack of wisdom and for his wrong doing.

Of all he read during those months and years he could recall but little that was helpful; no history, no biography; all was fiction, not facts; imaginary, not real. The heroes and heroines had been mostly base and vile; their methods vitiating, often disgraceful and criminal.

Had he been able to recall a tithe of all he had read, it would have benefitted him nothing, nor edified others, but memory had not been trained to remember. His mind, like an open sluiceway, had formed a channel through which the sewage of vicious and impure imaginations found free passage, after being spread upon the printed page for the perusal of such youth and boys as he. He was thankful in after years that he could recall no more of it—even wished he could remember less. Unfortunately, after such training of the memory, facts, figures, history, science, language, and the Scriptures as well—would pass from his recollection—after reading or hearing—like water through a sieve. His reasoning faculties also had to grow and be developed by slow processes, so thoroughly had he revelled in that which required no reasoning or reflection.

CHAPTER XX.

ALIVE FROM THE DEAD.

The holidays came and were enjoyed by Walter and Carroll at their homes. Rosamond had invited several friends to meet Walter, thus making Christmas a day of delight.

Clarence had never been more kind to him. At times he appeared more than usually cheerful; again, he seemed lost in reverie; his lips would move nervously, his hands and feet become restless, his eyes dull; an expression of desire would flash over his face, then die away into a look of sickening dread. At such times Rosamond would ask him a question, or bring one of the children to him to divert his attention from whatever engaged his thoughts. Martin and his father had not failed to notice his manner. While Mr. Seely made no mention of it, Martin told Walter that Clarence was becoming more and more addicted to strong drink. Deeply grieved as Walter felt to hear it, his sympathies became more active toward his brother-in-law and Rosamond, and he resolved to try some specific means to save the former from a drunkard's career and end.

In the midst of the holiday festivities the name of Edward was often upon the lips of one and another. "If he were only here," was the oft repeated expression.

Weeks and months had passed since any form of tidings had come from him. More than ever the hope of seeing him again struggled against the fear that he had perished with the thousands who—in southern prison pens—died, not less nobly for their country, but less efficiently, than on the battlefield.

The winter passed and vacation found Walter again at Rosamond's accompanied by a classmate. The morning after their arrival the warm spring sunshine was so inviting they sauntered through garden and orchard where Mr. Seely was trimming

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apple trees. From the farm house, looking across the fields toward Lockwood, they decided to walk in that direction and possibly visit the town before returning. Now and then a lark or robin flew past them in search of a nesting place, or carrying bits of grass or other material, to complete their marvelous house building.

Here and there a violet smiled up at them from among the tender grass, as if asking to be picked, and its fragrance inhaled—its beauty admired. Collecting each a bouquet for himself they passed out of the fields and meadows and stood on the brow of the hill that overlooked the valley lying between them and Lockwood—a mile away on another hillside.

How many times Walter had stood there in bygone days! In the roadway below him his mother one day alighted from the carriage to pick up a valuable jewel. She had seen it flashing in the sunlight and told her husband, but he laughed and replied, “all is not gold that glistens;” alighting while he held the spirited horses she returned a few steps and lifted it out of the dust. As no owner was found for it, she wore it upon her neck, the only ornament she had cared to possess.

Under an ample oak, growing on the hillside, Walter and Martin had often gathered acorns. From the spring at the foot of the hill by the roadside, they had refreshed themselves when going to or from Sunday school. Along the banks of the river—winding its way down the valley like a silver serpent—they had often walked while hunting or fishing.

Walter mentioned these things to his companion and added, “Martin and I may stand here often in the future—together or alone but never more as light-hearted, fun-loving boys.

It—seems but yesterday when, bare-footed, he and I together trudged along this road. Whether coming manhood’s days will possess the hoped for joys, as boyhood’s hours have been filled with them, remains to be seen.

“You and I, Classmate—while neither men nor boys, too old to acknowledge ourselves to be the one, too young to be accepted by older heads as the other—are gaining arguments, slowly but surely every day—on these fuzzy cheeks, and in

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these growing statures, to prove we are, at least, the stuff men are made of."

As their laugh rang out on the morning air, they descended the bluff to the road that ran across the valley and river to Lockwood. The morning train from Chicago to Juliet came rushing down the valley—the gilded mountings on its engine flashing in the sunlight—its comet-like trail of smoke and steam hanging over the cars like a plume; a moment it stopped at the depot in Lockwood, then, on through the town—on to Juliet, which, though miles away, could be plainly seen down the valley toward the South.

"What a marvel of power and convenience that engine and those cars are," said Walter's companion. "Shut in as I am at Plainwell—our only public conveyance the daily stage—I am filled with awe and admiration every time I see a train of cars in motion."

"Yes, and we are living in an age of wonderful improvements," said Walter. Just then he cast his eyes along the highway before them and saw a lady coming toward them, accompanied by a man in soldier's uniform. After gazing at them a moment in silence he said, "we shall soon cross the canal as we enter town; you will note the contrast between that train of cars and the slow motion of the canal boats which, with the stage coach, were the main ways of traveling up and down this valley until the railroad was constructed."

"Ah!" said Walter's classmate as he, in turn, looked ahead; "there comes a soldier; I presume his uniform looks familiar to you."

"Yes," said Walter; "I know that lady—a relative, living in Lockwood—probably the soldier was a comrade to my brother, who has been a prisoner for a long time; not having heard from him for many months we fear he is dead. I dread to hear the message that soldier may be bringing, yet I long to meet him. How my heart throbs with an unaccountable emotion!" added Walter, after walking a few rods in silence.

Approaching within a dozen yards of the lady—his cousin—Walter bade her good morning.

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"What comrade have I there?" he inquired, pointing toward the soldier, who had drawn his cap down to hide his face and eyes.

"Someone you will be glad to see," she answered, as the soldier looked up, his eyes filled with tears.

Walter was standing face to face with Edward.

"Oh, my comrade brother! dead, and alive again!" Walter cried, as they threw their arms around each other's neck and in silence wept for joy—words were inadequate to express their happiness at this unlooked for meeting.

After Walter had introduced Edward and his cousin to his classmate, he said to him: "You will excuse me, under the circumstances, for asking that we postpone our visit to Lockwood."

"Most assuredly," he replied; "but as I have business there, and am so near, I will go now and attend to it."

The happy trio then hastened toward Mr. Seely's as rapidly as Edward's feeble condition would permit. He told of his "exchange," with several thousand other prisoners; how—partly by sea and then by cars, he had come thus far on his journey homeward.

Reaching Lockwood the night before, he made his way through the darkness to Aunt Carrie's; his home longings had inspired him to start thus early in the morning. How many eager questions they asked each other as they—soldier brothers—took their peaceful march together. Every tree and stone and bridge were familiar way marks to Edward's eyes. How often had he thought of this road while marching amid new and strange scenes in an enemy's country—dangers threatening on every hand. Here all was peaceful and safe.

Well did Walter know that in Edward's mind—as the old home appeared in view—were thoughts—sad thoughts—of their mother, who would not be there to greet him.

As they came opposite the orchard they saw their father still at work trimming the trees.

"Shall we go and meet him, Edward, before going to the house?" asked Walter.

"Yes," was Edward's only reply.

Crossing the fence they walked among the trees toward their

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father. Hearing voices, he turned and glanced toward them. Either not recognizing them at the distance, or to hide his emotions, he resumed his work.

"He has grown very gray while I have been gone," said Edward.

"Yes, Edward," said Walter; "father has seen and suffered a great amount of anxiety and sorrow in the years you have been away, but your coming will cheer him greatly."

Hearing their voices so near, Mr. Seely turned again, with an inquiring look; recognizing Walter first, he said: "Why, I thought you had gone to ——" then stopped short, as Edward stepped nearer to him and said: "father, don't you know me?"

Dropping his tools, Mr. Seely gathered him to his heart and said, with choking voice:

"Oh, bless the Lord, Edward! Is it possible you are alive and have come home to us again? We had long since given you up for dead, my son; this unexpected joy seems too good to be true. Are you well?" he asked, releasing him from his embrace.

"Not well," Edward answered, "but far better than many who were in prison with me, or I could not be here."

"Come," said his father, also addressing his cousin and Walter, "we will go to the house; your mother will not be there to welcome you, Edward, my son, but Rosamond would want to see you if she knew you were here."

As they started toward the house Rosamond—looking up from her work, and out through the kitchen window, saw the group coming from the orchard; a second glance assured her, it was Edward; crossing the garden at a rapid pace she cried, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks: "Oh, Edward! Edward! My brother! Home at last."

After the greeting they walked arm in arm until they reached the door. All was silent within; no voice—no footstep. Edward hesitated on the threshold, as if waiting for another familiar greeting. For the first time the full truth seemed to flash upon his mind that he should see his mother no more; for

the moment he was unmanned. His joy yielded place to a greater sorrow. Resting his head and hand against the casement of the door, he wept bitterly.

“Poor Edward!” exclaimed his cousin, as she stood among the sympathizing group; “his is a sad, as well as a joyous, home-coming; but,” she added, as if she too had caught the spirit of Aunt Carrie—her devoted mother—“it is all for the best, Edward.”

Entering the house, Mr. Seely sat down to visit with his two sons, while emotions of pride and happiness filled his heart.

Rosamond, assisted by her cousin, began preparing the dinner.

“Edward,” she asked, coming back to the sitting room door, “what would you like for dinner?”

“I must take very small rations for a while the surgeon said, until my capacity for abundance is restored; and”—he answered further, with something of his old time cheerfulness—“I would like to have it served on a board or tin plate, with an iron spoon, knife, and fork to eat it with.”

Clarence and Martin came at noon from the field where they had been working. They entered the sitting room without being informed of Edward’s return; their surprise at seeing him was unbounded, and for the third time within a couple of hours he gave a brief account of himself, in answer to their many questions.

“Mamma,” called Rosamond’s little girl from the bedroom, awakened now from sleep. “Who are dot sollar man talkin’ wif drampa and untle Walfer?”

Edward, hearing her childish inquiry, went to the bedroom door. The change in her was a surprise to him; from an infant—lying in his arms when he went away—she had grown to be a prattling child.

So long had he been deprived of the presence and sight of child life and womanhood, the picture before him—of Rosamond, standing with her child in her arms—was a scene of love and beauty calculated to touch his heart; putting his arms around them he kissed them both. The child drew closer to her mother

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at first, as if in fear; then, attracted by the shining buttons on his coat, she reached her hands toward him; taking her in his arms he carried her to the sitting room.

"Has 'ou dot on untle Walfer's toat?" the child asked, scrutinizing him carefully.

"Has uncle Walter a coat with bright buttons on it?" Edward inquired, smiling.

"Untle Walfer was a soller, him was," she further informed him, then asked, "where did 'ou been? Did 'ou see any 'ittle dirls?"

Unable to inform her understanding, as to her first question, he answered her second inquiry by saying:

"Yes, I saw a great many little girls; their faces, hands and feet were black."

"Did 'eir mammas wash the black off?" the child asked, with a look of astonishment.

"No," said Edward, "the black will not wash off; but their hair is curlier than grandpa's."

"Poor 'ittle dirlies," said the child, with a far-away look in her eyes, as she put her hands upon her straight, long hair—as if thinking of the snarls that made her cry when her mother combed them out—pitying also the children whose hair was so curly and hard to comb, whose mothers never washed the "black" off their faces.

When dinner was ready, and all were seated at the table, Walter—who was anything but a Christian boy when Edward went away—surprised him, as, with trembling lips, he returned thanks to the Giver of the blessings before them, but especially for the privilege of having with them him whom they had so long mourned as never to return. Rosamond was sitting in her mother's place. The table was filled with a variety and abundance of food, such as Edward has not seen for many months. The memory of the long, weary days of hunger came up before him. "Oh," he thought to himself, "if I could only have had such a repast spread before me within those prison walls and shared it with my starving comrades, how much suffering and how many deaths would have been prevented."

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He recalled the brief respite from pinching hunger, he and others were permitted to enjoy in the stockade at Andersonville, when a box of food was admitted, sent by his mother and others, whose friends or relatives were then with him in prison.

Now at home, with abundance before him, he sat as if stupefied—his plate of food before him untouched, while all the others had commenced eating.

“What can I help you to, my son?” said Mr. Seely. His words aroused Edward from the reverie by which he seemed to be made unconscious of his surroundings. As all eyes were turned toward him, he said:

“I have often dreamed of such a scene as this, father! but on waking up have found it a delusion; such dreams I came to dread, the waking from them was so painful and full of bitter disappointment. I have been trying to make myself realize I am not dreaming now, but am truly awake and that this is all real. But I must restrain my appetite; many of our men—notwithstanding all the surgeon’s precautions—ate too much after entering the Federal lines, and did not live to reach home. But I do not think I can eat any dinner after all”—saying which he laid down his knife and fork and pushed his plate from him, while a smile began to drive his serious looks away.

“Why not? are you sick?” was asked in alarm.

“Oh, no,” he replied, trying to divert their minds from the painful things he had been saying, “but Rosamond has not furnished me a tin plate and iron spoon; I hardly know how to use these dishes. I have been used to cooking my corn meal on a brick, and—to tell the truth—I have eaten my light rations from my fingers entirely of late.”

Rosamond’s face flushed and her eyes filled with tears, but she said to him: “You cannot be indulged in such exquisite barbarities any more. You must be content to use china and silver now; if I had dishes made of diamonds and spoons of gold I would not think them better than you deserve.”

“You have not told us much about your prison life,” said Rosamond’s husband.

“That is a subject, Clarence, I do not like to talk about,”

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said Edward. "You could not realize it were I to describe it, and it would only arouse bitter feelings in your minds. I am glád to have lived to be delivered from it. If I regain my health and strength, as they were before I was captured—a year and a half ago—and peace and friendship shall be established between North and South, I shall be thankful. I am anxious to see the war come to an end. I am also willing to join my regiment as soon as able, and take my chances again."

The dinner hour passed; the afternoon and evening were given up by the family to entertaining Edward—indeed, the week that followed was spent in visiting and receiving company that came to see him.

Slowly his strength returned; his weakened system could scarcely assimilate the nourishing food provided him; once—for several hours—his life was despaired of—the result of change in diet and manner of living, notwithstanding the cautious heed he gave his surgeon's instructions. He found it difficult to sleep upon the soft bed Rosamond's hands had so carefully prepared for him—in marked contrast to the hole in which he and two comrades had all but burrowed—roofed over with rough sticks and a ragged blanket. Now he often rolled himself in a bed quilt and laid upon the carpeted floor in Rosamond's parlor, before he could coax sleep to his wakeful eyes.

When ready for duty at the front again, while waiting in daily expectation of being ordered to rejoin his regiment, he and Walter rode to Lockwood for the family mail.

"Hurrah!" said Walter, as he came from the postoffice with an open paper in his hand.

"What's the news?" Edward asked.

"No more soldiering for you," said Walter, as he read aloud: "All soldiers at home on furloughs or leave of absence now under orders to report for duty will remain under suspended orders until further notice."

Turning to another column, he read the head lines:

"THE LAST BATTLE IS FOUGHT; THE WAR IS OVER."

"That settles it, then," said Edward, thoughtfully.

"Yes," said Walter, "*this cruel war is over.*"

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A month later Edward rejoined the fragment of his regiment that so proudly left Juliet three years before—a thousand strong. The beautiful flag that had been presented to them was weather stained and battle torn—rent and riddled by shot and shell, but never surrendered to the enemy. Its bearers had fallen again and again, wounded or dead, but other brave hands quickly raised it up. Now its tattered shreds hung to the scarred staff, to be kept in memory of the heroes who had fallen, and looked upon by those who survived to tell of the noble deeds of their dead comrades.

The regiment was discharged, and Edward, like thousands of others, returned to the honest avocations of peace.

Some there were who predicted that an army, accustomed to plundering and bloodshed, being disbanded would overrun the country with men who would be bandits and outlaws—paying no heed to law and order and the rights of peaceable men and women. Many thousands lost their lives during the long and bloody conflict, whereby the slaves were made free—the Union saved; but better still—pledge of the country's safety and future greatness—those who survived preserved their *manhood*—becoming good citizens, faithful in all the true relations of life.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EVIL TRAFFIC.

After his return from the army, Walter had actively engaged in the work of the temperance society which he had assisted in forming before he enlisted.

Edward united also and together he and Walter attended regularly, while the latter was spending his vacation on the farm.

Their surprise and pleasure were increased each week as they welcomed their former comrades to membership.

Walter rejoiced especially to meet Claude Sharon, after their long separation in different branches of army service.

The presence of so many blue uniforms and the white apparel and rosy cheeks of the young ladies was a blending of national colors, quite patriotic.

Temperance hymns and—in honor of the soldiers present—patriotic tunes were sung.

The soldiers, with few exceptions, did not object to signing the “iron clad” pledge.

Harry Stone, who had felt the force of a rebel bullet, expressed the sentiments of his comrades when he said: “I have been shot in the foot once, and am *proud* of it. I have—I must confess—been shot in the neck a great many times and am *ashamed* of that. But,” he added, when the ripple of laughter, caused by his remark, had subsided—“having been ‘honorably discharged’ from one army, I have decided to enlist in another and fight—under the cold water flag—against the greatest enemy our country has ever had.”

When the applause following his remarks had died away, James Clarkson—who had just been elected president—remarked: “I have been more fortunate than Comrade Harry—as to bullet wounds—but I have suffered considerably from ‘snakes

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in my boots'—reptiles that 'sting like an adder.' I think, however, the attractions and influence of this pleasant company, enlisted in a common cause and to help each other, will be such that I will hereafter feel no inclination to go where such serpents are to be met with. I feel the responsibility you have placed upon me, but I trust—by your aid—I shall prove worthy the honor I have received."

Walter rejoiced when Claude Sharon said: "The pledge has helped me. The memory of this society and the pledge I took when it was organized was a great benefit to me, while battling against our country's foes, and personal enemies in the form of temptations to wrong doing. In the army I was often grieved to see men—while fighting to free one class from bondage—yield themselves to a worse kind of slavery.

"I do not understand how our government, which has made such an effort to preserve the Union, can remain idle—and seem blind to the fact—that the whole government—state and national—is being surrendered to the sway of the despot, King Alcohol.

"We soldiers took an oath we would defend the Union. We did it, with swords and bullets. Now comrades! as the country is still in danger, we must defend it by moral suasion and our ballots."

Dr. Leonard was present with his daughters; each wore a look of happy contentment, for the Doctor had kept his pledge faithfully and his practice had rapidly increased.

As the members of the society separated that night each felt that the strong had found a place to work for the weak and erring; a place where the victims of appetite and weakness could find a refuge from temptation.

Passing along the streets, they were made to realize how great was the need for agencies of reform and retreats for the tempted. The saloons and taverns were open on every business street and thronged with men and boys—beviies of girls and women, in some cases, mingling with the boisterous patrons of the bar.

Noise and profanity, blended with the sound of clinking

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glasses and shuffling feet. Men went reeling out, to be met by policemen and led away to jail; while thus depriving their families of their presence, it was really a protection from the drunken rudeness of an intoxicated husband, son or father. When, however, prosecution followed, the fine imposed still further deprived the family of needed help.

Occasionally mothers or wives could be seen standing outside the awful places of revelry and crime, until—hearing the voice of some loved ones for whom they were searching—they could wait no longer; made heedless of danger and threatened insult—by the love and pity that burned in their hearts—they would enter; some returning with tokens of grief or despair stamped upon every feature; others could be seen leading their husband or father, or a youth, with flashing eyes—face flushed with the excitement of the game or by the fiery beverage he had taken.

“Oh, Edward!” said Walter, as they viewed these scenes, “such things fairly make my blood boil. I tremble lest Rosamond may yet be driven to such extremities as those poor women are.”

As they passed the place he had entered with Harry Shields, Walter recalled the incident with too much of shame to mention it to his brother. While driving homeward in the calm, starlit summer night, Edward, as if impressed with the maturing judgment of his younger brother, said to him:

“It does not seem as if you are the same Walter you were when I went from home.”

“I trust I am not,” he replied. “I was led to see my follies and withdraw from wrong associates before evil habits got the mastery of me. Mother’s last days greatly strengthened and encouraged me. Mr. Vinton has been a true pastor and friend, to whom I owe much, for his example and advice. This temperance society, by its work and instruction, has also been very beneficial to me. While I do not regard it as I do the church and Sunday school, I observe it has already brought many under their influence.”

“I am very glad you have commenced your college course,” said Edward. “It was my ambition, and I was planning to

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obtain a more thorough education than I possess. When the war began I felt I would not be doing my duty to the present or future of our country by letting my personal interests come before the obligation I owe the government. It does not appear now that I shall be able to resume my studies, but I shall gladly aid you in your undertaking."

"What are your plans for yourself, if it is a fair question?" asked Walter.

"Well," he replied, "as father has deeded the east farm to Rosamond and Clarence, they will move there. He has asked me to take charge of the homestead for a year or two, which I expect to do in the Spring; after Rosamond has moved to her new home a housekeeper will be installed. Martin will attend school next winter and work with me after the term closes. I shall be pleased to have you with me next summer during your vacation."

"That will certainly be very pleasant to me, Edward," Walter remarked. "It will seem like old times if we three boys work again together in the same fields. I presume our age and experience will not cause father to repeat his maxim to us as he used to."

"What was that?" asked Edward.

"Don't you remember, when we would get to playing while at work, he would say, 'one boy is a whole boy; two boys are half a boy; three boys are no boy at all?' "

Having reached the gate leading to the barn Walter alighted and opened it for Edward to drive through. A sudden movement of something white by the side of the road frightened the horses. They dashed through the gateway and across the yard at full speed, over shrubbery and flower beds. Edward was trying to rein them to the right of a tree to avoid a collision; a rein parted and he was thrown from the carriage.

Fearing he was killed or badly injured Walter hastened toward him; but in a moment he sprang to his feet; running at full speed—as the horses were circling through the garden—he came in ahead of them and seized them by the bridles; after being dragged a few rods he brought them to a standstill,

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where they stood trembling and panting when Walter reached them.

“Pretty well done,” he remarked; “one infantry man capturing a runaway troop of cavalry; I see you have lost nothing of your bravery as a horseman, Edward. Are you injured in any way?”

“No bones broken,” Edward replied; “but I guess that is more than can be said for Rosamond’s flowers and father’s choice fruit trees. We are lucky nothing worse has happened.”

So quiet had been the whole affair that no one in the house had been awakened. The next morning, however, Mr. Seely going out quite early discovered the results.

“Walter,” he said, when he began serving at the breakfast table, “where were you and Edward last night? Give an account of yourselves.”

Rosamond looked at her father in astonishment, as did also the other members of the family—except Walter and Edward, who, surmising what their father had discovered, saw through the assumed sternness of his looks and tone of voice.

“We went to the temperance society in Lockwood,” Walter answered.

“Judging by the looks of things in the door yard and garden, I should conclude you were at an *intemperance* society,” said Mr. Seely, less seriously.

“That was Edward’s doing,” Walter replied. “He must have thought he was going to be captured again; not being on foot this time. he ‘showed the white feather’ when something rushed from the bushes by the gate side, and he drove off at full speed, without offering to take me out of danger, and was not very particular where he went.”

“May the saints presairve us!” exclaimed John, the hired man—crossing himself—“but whin I wint to dig the peratees for breakfus I was shure a whoole rigimint of artillery had cavoorted ferninst the house and over the pay voines;” then his little, deep-set eyes fairly twinkled out of sight in his round red face, while his sides shook with laughter.

“Did the horses run away, Edward?” asked Martin.

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“Well, yes,” answered Edward—“at least they did not do much walking for a short time after I started through the gateway; but I cannot imagine what frightened them.”

“Oh pshaw, Edward!” said Martin, laughing. “You must have seen several ‘white feathers.’ Last summer I put two goose eggs under a hen; only one hatched. When the gosling grew and feathered out it was white; after the hen left it, the flock of geese at the barn would not allow it to go with them, so it has mated with old Rover day times; at night it creeps under the bushes by the gate. That was what *scared you*, Edward.”

“*Scared me!*” exclaimed Edward, as he joined the rest in a hearty laugh at the new turn Martin had given the affair by transferring the fright from the horses to him.

“It may scare horses,” Edward added; “but, Martin! it takes something more than a white goose to frighten an old soldier; on the other hand, all kinds of fowls down South learned, before the war was over, to keep shy of soldiers; by the time they learned that lesson many were beyond the possibility of profiting by their knowledge.”

After their good-natured chaffing had ended and breakfast was finished, Walter read a chapter in the Bible as usual and offered prayer, fervently thanking the Divine Being for escape from danger, and prayed that each might have grace to live right lives and be ready when death should come.

“May the Howly Mother bless yees, Walther, fer yure illigant prayin’,” said John, as he passed out of the room. Although John was a strict Romanist, and would occasionally take too much “grog” for steady walking, he was honest and industrious and not averse to Walter’s prayers and Bible reading.

Those were days and weeks of encouragement to Rosamond. Her brothers were at home as in former years—“children still, but of larger growth.” Their presence had also done Clarence good; with abundant harvests and their aid in gathering them he had been less despondent and had avoided Lockwood and late hours there to an unusual extent during the summer.

Rosamond’s face began to express less anxiety when business

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called him there. Mr. Seely and his sons had mutually agreed to see that she and her children were protected and provided for. Toward her husband they exercised feelings of pity and expressed their friendship.

CHAPTER XXII.

WRECKS.

Clarence Farnsworth possessed—in many respects—an exquisite nature. Gentle in disposition, sensitive to praise or blame; mild-eyed and fine featured; with a voice—in speech or song—soft and flexible as the tones of a flute, broken now and then when in conversation, by a musical, ringing laugh; tall and well formed in stature, with the natural graces of a gentleman, all who saw him at his best were attracted by his personal appearance and affable manners.

Had his mind, heart and ambitions been led into proper channels during his boyhood days, his would have been a beautiful and useful life.

Just when a mother's gentle voice was most needed to counsel, her hand to restrain or lead him, his mother was called from earth. In her place the tempter came and evil companions polluted his young life.

Being weak where he needed to be strong, he *did not* say "no" to temptation; being strong or self-willed when he should have been teachable, he *would not* say "yes" to the right and duty.

That he could be strong and true when self-interest or pleasure required was proven, when he mastered his appetite for strong drink, for two years before his marriage to Rosamond and as many more afterwards.

As Walter grew older and understood himself and human nature better, he discovered, very clearly, the cause of Clarence's weakness.

Each possessed a nervous temperament; generous in disposition, they wished to please others; of confiding nature, they were slow to mistrust evil purpose in any pretended friendship, however false.

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When, therefore, they first looked upon men indulging in strong drink, they were impressed with the show of good feeling over the social glass; or the evident relish with which they drank intoxicating beverages, gave them each a desire to partake.

Some say they do not enjoy the taste or odor of alcohol, naturally; the less excuse, the more the fool for using it. With Clarence Farnsworth and Walter Seely, to taste it once was to relish it and desire more.

The removal of temptation from his home, with the instruction and example given him by his parents; better still—his deep religious experience saved Walter at just the point in his boyhood days, when Clarence had been left exposed and led on to ruin.

“O, if Clarence had only become a true Christian before his mother died!” Walter had often said to himself—“that would have drawn him away from evil company, into pure associations; it would also have enlightened his moral perceptions, and given him strength to obey the dictates of his conscience.”

Walter had fondly hoped to see him take an interest in spiritual matters and attend church with Rosamond, after their little boy was taken from them. While in this he was disappointed, his putting on a better, stronger manhood during the summer following Edward’s return, caused a brighter—if but a transient—day to dawn on Rosamond.

From amid the happy group standing on the farm house porch one beautiful autumn morning, after a vacation so full of thrilling and delightful experiences, Walter took his departure again for college.

“Dood bye, untle Walfer, dood bye!” were among the last words he heard as he looked back—just as Edward was driving through the gateway—where so short a time before he so narrowly escaped what had well nigh been a sad catastrophe—and saw Rosamond’s little girl, in her grandfather Seely’s arms, waving her hands and throwing kisses after him.

As he and Edward drove along the straight and level road across the prairies, now fenced into farms—dotted with build-

ings and clusters of trees—they passed the homes of John Giddings and Mart Eldred.

“John’s wife died while you were in the army, Edward,” Walter replied—in answer to his brother’s question relative to this neighbor. “He continued to drink the same as when you used to see him coming from Lockwood, driving at such furious speed; his wife lived a sad life, and died leaving an infant daughter in his care. He promised her so many times he would reform. Indeed, he did keep his promise so long as he did not go to town; then, venturing there—unable to resist the temptations that met him at every open saloon door—he fell again and again. At last she gave up in despair. She was a beautiful woman of culture and refinement, reared in an excellent home. I was at the funeral. It seemed to crush John’s heart when he looked at his little Reta, clinging to her young aunt, and calling for her mother.”

“What became of Mart Eldred? Did he cease drinking?” asked Edward.

“No,” answered Walter; “he grew more and more corpulent and red faced; finally sold his farm and moved West. Edward, you remember the old man who came to our house in a half frozen, drunken state one night several years ago when we boys and John were alone?”

“Yes, I remember the incident very well,” replied Edward; “he would have frozen to death had we not taken him in.”

“He lives in the house yonder by the large barn,” Walter remarked, pointing toward a cluster of handsome farm buildings.

“His boys are mostly man-grown; one is studying to be a priest; the rest work the farm. Not one has followed the father’s intemperate example. He does not go to Lockwood often, then he is accompanied by his wife; without her he would surely come home intoxicated. She is a good manager, hence their prosperity.”

“It is quite remarkable,” said Edward, “all the boys are sober, industrious young men; probably they have seen enough in their father’s conduct to satisfy and disgust them with drinking.

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“But who lives here?” he asked, as they passed a place in the last stages of dilapidation with but few signs of life about.

The gate was swinging on one hinge, the latch broken; boards and pickets were off the fence in places; many panes of glass were broken from the windows and the holes filled with old clothes; the chimney was half tumbled down. Weeds were standing tall and ripe in the garden. Barns, pens, tumbled down stacks of hay and straw, broken wagons and rusty, weather-beaten machinery were to be seen here and there—going to wrack and ruin, while beyond lay a beautiful tract of land—but covered with weeds and stunted corn, surrounded by a tumbled down fence—all needing only the hand of sobriety and industry to make a garden of wealth.

“Oh!” exclaimed Edward, before Walter could answer his query, “it is John Bunnel’s place!”

Just then that individual came out upon the rickety porch. The crown of his hat partly gone—his hair was standing up like feathers on the head of a tufted Indian; his coat ragged, his kness through his pantaloons, toes out of his boots. A girl and boy followed him, dressed in style in keeping with their father’s—only their faces were clean, their hair smoothly combed—as was their mother’s also, who appeared at the window as Walter and Edward drove past.

To them it had been almost a daily occurrence for years to see John Bunnel passing their home—early in the day—on his way to Lockwood. He drove a bony, spavined horse, harnessed with ropes, straps and chains, to a rickety, rattling old vehicle—axles bent by frequent collisions with various objects until the wheels wobbled—each at a different angle—as they made their crazy revolutions. Going, he sat in a drooping, listless attitude, holding the lines carelessly, while the horse, head down, jogged slowly along. Returning—the horse, panting and frightened, would zigzag from side to side in the road; now, stand still; then, jump and start on in a limping canter, until brought to a slower pace or another standstill by John, who would lash and saw him with whip and lines in one hand, while with the other he would wave his old hat and shout and

sing, rock and reel until he reached home and was hidden from public view until the next day.

Other places were passed which were the homes of men who had become drunkards, who frequently passed Mr. Seely's home, going to Lockwood; returning, they were usually in a state of noisy delirium or stupefied intoxication.

One of these—Mr. Harrington—especially impressed Walter with feelings of sadness and pity. With his whitened locks and feeble body it seemed each time he passed that he could not endure another day's exposure to the scorching heat of the summer's sun, nor the freezing blasts of winter.

It was at his house that Mary Pendleton—his niece—made her home when not teaching in the district where Walter and Edward lived. To Mrs. Seely, with whom she found a home while teaching, she often mentioned her uncle's habits with expressions of shame; while she pitied him and her aged aunt, she was always glad when the hour arrived that her duty made it her pleasant privilege to return to her school and boarding place. In her—during Rosamond's absence—Mrs. Seely found one who all but filled a daughter's place; while admiring her as a teacher, the younger boys loved, and—at home—caressed her as an older sister. No one more sincerely mourned their mother's death, nor sympathized more tenderly with the sorrowing household.

"I did not ask you about Mr. Harrington as we passed his house. What became of him? I have not seen him pass father's since I came home," said Edward.

"He is still living, but is old and feeble," answered Walter. "After his old horse died and he rented his farm he could not go to Lockwood; I presume he cannot procure liquor, so—making a virtue of necessity—keeps sober."

"I do not wish anyone a particle of harm or loss," said Edward, smiling—"but it might be a good thing if more such men would lose their horses. It might be an effectual way of keeping them sober by compelling them to remain at home. Think for a moment how badly such men abuse their horses!" said Edward, more seriously.

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“How many times some of those whose places we have passed have driven their teams to Lockwood with heavy loads; then, going to the saloons, gambled, drank and treated until the money received for their loads of produce was all spent! Then—often late at night—whooping and cursing, they have driven their hungry, tired horses home on the run. I tell you, Walter, they deserved to be horsewhipped.”

“That only proves,” replied Walter, “that the man who drinks is not the only one to suffer on account of it; even the dumb brutes in his power must endure his cruelty.

“Do you remember that big, burly Irishman who lived in the shanty near the school house—how he would come home drunk and often, finding his wife working at the wash tub, would beat her until her eyes were black, then turn her and the children out of doors?

“If there are so many drinking men living on this one road leading to Lockwood, how many more are there on all the other roads leading to our market town? How much misery and sorrow must those homes represent, into which the Lockwood saloons are sending their customers—victims of their infamous traffic?

“Then, further, think of all the drinking men and boys who live on the various roads leading from the quiet, beautiful rural sections of the country into towns and cities! Then think of the blight which the licensed saloon in those places is sending upon the farm homes of the nation! Not only so, but the cities and towns themselves, where the saloons are located, think of them and the crime and poverty resulting from intemperance! What a widespread curse is the liquor traffic!”

Walter paused a few moments and added: “I wish I was old enough and able to write a book, preach, lecture—do something to help abolish it.”

“Are there any saloons in Plainwell?” asked Edward—as they were approaching the place of their destination.

“There are none,” said Walter; “what is more, I did not see a drunken man while I was there last year at college, save

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when a farmer on his way home or someone came in an intoxicated state from Juliet or Lockwood.

“You will notice as we drive through the beautiful town how quiet and orderly everything is. On the business streets—by night or day—a lady is just as safe as a man; they hardly need the one policeman, who goes home at ten o’clock at night and comes upon the street at seven o’clock in the morning.

“If they had saloons there, no doubt some students would frequent them. Many citizens and their sons would form drinking habits; some, who have reformed and moved there to be separated from so many temptations, would again fall into their former habits. As many policemen would be needed as in Lockwood or Juliet; crime would increase and the jail be filled.

“By the way, that makes me think! Do you know, Edward, eighty per cent of the prisoners in the penitentiary at Juliet committed crimes through the influence of intemperance? One of the officers gave us that startling information; he was hunting an escaped convict and ate dinner at our house.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP.

“Here we are in Plainwell!” exclaimed Walter, and proceeded to point out to Edward the college—towering above the tree tops; he called his attention also to the principal buildings and points of interest as they passed on until they arrived at Mrs. Wellington’s in time for dinner.

Edward improved the afternoon visiting his army comrades residing in Plainwell, then returned to his home in the early evening.

Walter found new conditions prevailing in Mrs. Wellington’s home. Her daughter had married and moved away. Clarence Frisbie was not to resume his studies until later in the year. Walter decided instead of going to his room, to spend this first evening after his return, with Mrs. Wellington and her adopted daughter, recounting their various experiences during vacation. Many young men at different times had made their home with this pleasant family. Mrs. Wellington’s motherly ways made the most homesick students forget their loneliness. Her careful nursing brought them back to health when ill. Her counsel or mirthful ridicule would soon rid them of uncouth manners or pernicious habits.

When her oldest son died, and—shortly after—she was called to part with her youngest child, the only remaining son, the door of her mother heart was left wide open; young men found a ready welcome, as though in them also—in their ambitions and temptations—she found an opportunity to perform the unfinished work she had planned for her own loved ones.

When Maud was a little child Mrs. Wellington had adopted her from an institution devoted to the care of orphan children. She now filled a large place in her new mother’s affections and thoughts.

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The few rescued fragments of the girl's history, revealed the facts, that her mother had been a woman of rare qualities of mind and heart, but had married outside of pleasant surroundings and helpful family relations.

The husband and father—whatever he was by nature and early education, or what he might have become by right moral influences, was another illustration of the power of strong drink; having reduced his family to poverty he left them to die of want, if human help failed to succor before sickness and starvation had done their work.

Death came to the mother's relief in an hour of extreme sorrow and need; not, however, until her children, found on the street by a kind-hearted policeman, crying for food and shelter, had been led to the door of the "Home of the Friendless."

There—after the plain obsequies of their mother had been performed by public charity—they were afforded protection and care, in company with hundreds more who were similarly bereft—by a similar cause.

Mrs. Wellington and her husband visited the institution shortly after the death of their youngest child; they were attracted by the sweet voice and gentle manners of Maud—then a child of four years—whom they saw among the children.

While visiting other places of interest in the city Mrs. Wellington could not dismiss frequent thoughts about the girl. Her husband was not only surprised at her declining a day's pleasure in Central Park, but more so when he was requested to accompany her again to the "Home of the Friendless." Realizing, however, how sorely grieved her heart had been by their bereavement, thought possibly she had seen some boy who reminded her of their little son; or that she had formed some generous plan and wished more knowledge of the institution before she returned to her western home to enlist the co-operation of her friends in performing her benevolent purposes. When, therefore, he asked if she found pleasure in seeing so many homeless children, she replied:

"No, that is not it. I did not derive much pleasure from what I saw there; it seemed too sad to see so many orphans.

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It is a question of duty. Those children need homes. We have two vacant chairs at our table—two vacant places in our home. I cannot free my mind from the thought we ought to adopt one of those children.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Wellington, “we will go at once and see them.”

On the way he inquired if she had seen a little boy she especially wished to adopt.

“I did not,” she replied; “but do you remember the little girl dressed in pink, who stood in the gallery and sang alone so sweetly? I shall be glad if she is still there and we can get her!”

“I do remember her,” he answered; “but do you think you can endure the labor and care of so young a child?” he added, after a moment’s pause.

“I can endure it better than I can the lonely feelings that weigh so heavily and constantly on my heart,” his wife replied.

Arriving at the institution Mrs. Wellington asked the matron concerning little Maud.

“I regret to say, a lady called and partially engaged her since you were here,” stated the matron; “as she would hardly be strong enough, however, to act as nurse and playmate for the lady’s baby the managers will not be likely to consent to the arrangement.”

“I shall be very sorry if I fail to get her,” said Mrs. Wellington, while a look of disappointment rested on her face.

“Well, then, if that is the case,” said Mr. Wellington—addressing the matron with indications of increasing interest in the matter—“will you present our application to the managers, with the understanding that we will adopt her as our own child and give her the same advantages we have given our daughter, who is now grown to young womanhood?”

“I am quite positive the knowledge of your intentions will have much to do with the decision of the Board,” said the matron. “They desire to do the very best they can for each child, while they wish also to please their patrons and friends of the institution. If you desire,” added the matron, “I will

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send for Maud, that she may come to the parlor; then you can better form an opinion about her."

Ringing a bell, a young lady appeared, to whom the matron said: "Will you please bring little Maud to me! This lady and gentleman heard her sing when they were here the other day and wish to see her again."

"I hope," said the young lady, smiling, "they will be satisfied with merely *seeing* her, for it seems we cannot spare her from the children's choir."

While she was gone Mr. Wellington inquired as to the causes that brought so many children to the "Home."

"In a few cases," the matron said, "worthy parents, through sickness or accident, have been reduced to poverty, then died, leaving their children destitute and homeless; but at least ninety out of every hundred are the children of parents who have died or deserted them through intemperate habits; many others are in prison for crimes committed under the influence of strong drink.

"The law sanctions the saloon, Mr. Wellington! The people, by heavy taxation and private charity, pay for the punishment of those whom the saloons make criminals and for the care of those in poverty and weakness through intemperance. The parents of some of the children who have been here or are now under our care were once wealthy and influential; social wine drinking at elegant sideboards in pleasant homes created appetites which—at length—the vilest mixtures, sold in the lowest doggeries, could not appease; to get which the last article of furniture was sold and their garments pawned.

"Of course, the most whom we provide for are from the more ignorant and degraded class; some are the children of misplaced love and shame; but the poor children are not to blame; we owe a duty to them all.

"You will readily perceive from which class—especially on her mother's side—Maud descended; her superior gifts are quite apparent."

The door opened, and another lady than the one who went to bring Maud entered the room, leading the child by the hand.

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"Come to me, Maud, my child," said the matron—in a motherly tone—after introducing the strange lady to Mr. Wellington and his wife.

Seating Maud beside her on the sofa, she said: "Would you like to go with that lady and gentleman and take a ride on the cars, then be their little girl?"

"Can Dicky go, too?" she inquired concerning her little brother.

"Not now, I guess!" was the answer. "After a while, I think God will send some nice people after Dicky and Mary; then they will have nice homes, too, and you will all be good and happy children."

Maud walked slowly across the room in answer to Mrs. Wellington's call and received an orange, a new doll and other childish treasures.

As her new friend put her arms lovingly around her, pressing her to her heart, while telling her about the flowers and birds, toys, pictures and books that should be hers in the new home, the child turned her eyes from her treasures and said, confidingly, to Mrs. Wellington: "I want to be your little girl!"

Thus the conquest of the child's heart was accomplished which resulted in a lasting victory. In their pleasant home in Plainwell Mr. Wellington soon won the child's confidence and love by his gentle kindness; her greatest pleasure was to sit upon his knee or walk hand in hand with him to church and Sunday school.

Surrounded—as she was—by so many kind friends and new playmates she soon ceased to miss her brother and sister. Many, many years have passed, and these separated children—cast among utter strangers—have obtained no knowledge of each other.

A few years before Walter began boarding with Mrs. Wellington her husband's quiet and devoted life had ended serenely.

When alcoholic stimulants were recommended by his physician he declined to use them.

"No," he said with feeble voice, "my hours will be few; a week ago last night I dreamed I was beside a narrow stream;

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on the bridge that crossed it were seven planks; I dreamed again last night, all had disappeared; my end is at hand; my pain is bearable; I have lived a temperate life, let me die sober."

His ample fortune was swept away by the dishonest transactions carried on during his sickness by a trusted partner. With their home and a small insurance left by her husband, Mrs. Wellington and her daughters began the struggle of life alone. Through all the years of trial and sorrow she had retained a spirit so cheerful as to scatter the gloom of any who came into her presence. Walter Seely was not aware until this evening of his return to Plainwell how much at home he was, nor how near Mrs. Wellington came to filling the place in his heart which no one—except Rosamond and Aunt Carrie—had filled, since his mother was called away.

She had known a student's ambitions in her own son, and witnessed their expression in scores of others; she seemed, therefore, to know what words of encouragement to speak to him or how to curb a growing vanity liable to spring up in a young man's mind.

Her religious views were in accord with his own, hence he felt greater freedom in telling her of his feelings and temptations.

The bright fire that blazed and crackled that chilly autumn evening; the lamp light that cast prismatic shades of gold and emerald and blue, as it shone through the glass pendants of the lamp; the array of books, in which he and Maud were to study the coming term in college; the many questions asked and answered; the pleasantries and merry laughter made the evening pass only too quickly; then Walter—after Maud, by his request, had read a chapter in the Bible—offered a prayer full of thanksgiving for the blessings that had fallen upon their separate lives, also for the pleasure of being again permitted to enjoy each other's company.

As the days and weeks went by Walter began to think how favored boys are who have sisters about their own age, for Maud had come to fill a place in his thoughts, companionship and studies he deemed a sister naturally would occupy.

He loved Rosamond dearly, but had regarded her more as a

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counsellor and protector than as a companion, such as she had been to Edward—such as his room-mate, Clarence's sister was to him.

Maud, knowing nothing of a brother's care and attention, believed girls who have loving, attentive—not teasing—brothers have much to be thankful for.

Desiring to see her an actual and professing Christian, Walter took occasion to talk and pray with her, exacting a promise from her to read the Bible, pray and give her heart to the Lord. The promise made was faithfully performed; soon she obtained a sweet assurance of acceptance with the Saviour, ere long presenting herself for baptism and admission into the church where she had attended Sabbath school.

Among his other fellow students Walter found a wide field for Christian effort. A former comrade in the army—James Flavel—especially awakened his interest, inasmuch as he had developed a fondness for strong drink.

Preparing to practice law, his appetite for ardent spirits was a dangerous menace to his safety and success. Walter conversed and prayed with him—as did others—until he professed to be renewed in heart.

On the Sabbath afternoon following his act of uniting with the church and receiving the communion Walter called on him in his room. Finding him much depressed, he said to him: "What troubles you, James?"

"Walter," he replied excitedly, "it seems as if I shall become insane. I am dying for a drink of brandy. If I was where it could be procured I would have it. There are no saloons in Plainwell or I could find it—Sunday though it is—as I have in other towns by entering the back doors."

"Why do you especially desire it now, James? After taking the solemn vows you did today, and partaking of the communion, were you not made stronger in faith and courage?" asked Walter.

"Oh, that wine at the communion! it aroused the slumbering tiger in me," he answered, as he arose from his chair and walked about the room, with clenched fists and wildly staring eyes.

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“Yes, James,” said Walter, “I observed the wine that was used at the communion was fermented or badly adulterated. It burned my throat after I had taken it. I never tasted any like it but once, then I thought I could never breathe again; but a glass of water was near at hand which I drank and soon relieved the dreadful sensation.”

“Could I have had a drink of water at once,” said James, “it would not have affected me so long; but as I sat there while they were passing the cup to others all the past of my intemperate life came up before me; instead of filling me with alarm the taste of the wine seemed to goad me on to drink and risk it all again.”

“Let us kneel together, James, and pray!” said Walter. As he prayed James became more calm, and raised his voice in turn and plead with an agony of earnestness for strength to overcome his appetite for strong drink. When they arose from their knees James said:

“Do you think, Walter, it is my duty to take the sacrament and suffer as I have today and run the risk of falling into my former evil ways, as I shall certainly do, unless God works a miracle to keep me from falling?”

Unable to advise his friend what course to pursue, Walter said: “I will tell you what I do think, James. Unless ministers and church officers use more discretion in procuring wine for sacramental purposes, instead of presenting the ‘cup of the Lord,’ they will be presenting the ‘cup of devils.’ ”

“One thing is certain,” James remarked, after listening to Walter’s impassioned utterance, “if I did not drink the ‘devil’ out of that cup today he came to me very soon after I tasted of the contents. I do believe there were not enough of you present to prevent my drinking the very last drop had I got the cup in my hands again.”

Remaining with him during the night, Walter was gratified to see a change come to James, token of final victory in this, his first conflict with his great enemy. In his heart he prayed that through coming years he might be equally triumphant.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GO WORK IN MY VINEYARD.

The two following years were spent by Walter Seely in alternations of college life and vacations engaged in assisting Edward with his farm labor on the homestead, or Clarence Farnsworth on the east farm. The Sabbath found him attending church and Sunday school—occasionally assisting the pastors in Plainwell and Lockwood by reading and expounding the Scriptures in their churches; again—of his own accord—conducting public worship in the school house where he had formerly attended country school—hardly presuming to call such efforts “preaching.”

On the platform, advocating temperance, and prohibition of the liquor traffic, he experienced more freedom and influence, because of longer experience and more extended knowledge of the subjects.

Close application to study—in addition to the effects of his earlier indiscretions in novel reading—so impaired his vision as to terminate his college course in a most unexpected and yet not wholly disappointing manner.

While having noted the eminent success of many who possessed no diplomas from schools or colleges, he was desirous of the prestige their possession brings.

As principal of the schools he began teaching in a flourishing town near Plainwell. Ere the winter passed he was called to the pastorate of a church whose minister—in a runaway accident—had sustained a broken limb. Ere he had expected, therefore, he found himself entering upon his life work—a work that had been uppermost in his mind from the hour when he ceased to plead his inability to preach, and a joyful impulse followed, awakening a burning desire for the time to come when he could begin to “break the bread of life” to men.

Go Work In My Vineyard

Another event occurred—during the winter that found him employed as “teacher” and “preacher”—which was to bring increased happiness to Mr. Seely.

Several years had passed since his great bereavement cast its shadow on his heart and home. Rosamond had come with the light of her presence; still—while always welcome—he felt he was but a guest in his own house; when she went to her own home on the east farm and he became master of his again—while efficiently served by domestics—Edward and Martin observed it was not the home, nor their father’s the happiness enjoyed while Mrs. Seely lived.

Walter had often wished and prayed that—in the event of his father’s second marriage—he might be led to choose a wife of mature years; one with sound intelligence and ripe stores of knowledge; whose heart was actuated by deep religious principles, based upon a thorough love for God and firm faith in and familiarity with the Bible and the church.

Especially did he desire these things for his own sake; also that the good work his own mother’s Christian experience had begun in their home might be taken up and carried forward by the one who should come to take her place.

He had indulged the fanciful wish that dignity of personal form and attractive features—although not essentials—might be associated with the more important qualities.

As the holidays approached, Mr. Seely wrote to Walter, inviting him to come and meet her whom he—after the years of waiting—had chosen to fill the place of wife and mother in his home.

Edward met Walter at the depot; during the homeward ride he made numerous inquiries of his older brother concerning her whom he was so soon to call by a name more dear than any which he had uttered—in such a sense—for many years. He was greatly encouraged in his expectations by the words of commendation spoken by Edward concerning her in answer to his questions.

Whatever apprehensions he might have had, lest he should feel a sense of strangeness when first meeting her; whatever

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mental pictures he had formed concerning his new mother—her appearance at the door to greet him; her matronly form, her face, wreathed in smiles—outburst of a heart filled with goodness and love—bridged all distance of feeling and he passed over at one step to enter—with all his heart—her affectionate embrace and receive her greeting kiss and welcome; while he, in turn, imprinted filial kisses upon her cheeks—cheeks more beautiful than he had hoped to see.

He took occasion to say playfully in his new mother's presence after he had shaken hands and greeted other members of the family: "I congratulate you, father, on your choice! I congratulate us all! I trust mother will not have occasion to regret her coming among us!"

The word "mother" which he spoke—which he had heard so often within those walls in the years just past—uttered in tones of death and sadness—now resounded with life, and prophesied home and happiness for his father in the years to come. In Walter's mind here again was "home." When absent, his thoughts could turn hither. When present, it would be the center of the universe—"home"—to him.

What a Christmas dinner was that which feasted the family gathering at Sanford Seely's farm house the next day after Walter's arrival! Fruits, fowls, vegetables; the cream from the farm dairy and golden butter; relishes and desserts—rich and numerous. The table fairly groaned under its burden.

What a company was assembled. Mr. Seely—as reserved as ever, though radiant and cheerful—seated to serve at the center of the long table; Mrs. Seely—revered hostess and honored guest—in her place opposite her husband; Rosamond and Clarence, with their children—another little son having come to gladden his father's heart; Edward and Martin sitting next; Aunt Carrie and her daughters were there, and numerous other relatives and friends.

Walter was seated at the head of the table by the side of his father's aged mother—then nearing her "four-score years and ten"—eyes undimmed and quick to hear—full of mirth as any present.

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When all was in readiness Mr. Seely said to Walter: "My son, will you please return thanks?"

What an occasion for thanksgiving! What experiences and expectations! What memories came rushing in upon his mind! He could hardly crowd into the limits of an ordinary "blessing" an expression of the fullness of gratitude which came welling up from his heart.

Other hearts than his own were evidently stirred with similar emotions; in many eyes the tears were glistening.

It was a feast to be remembered, not for the pleasures of the palate alone, but as the occasion when new ties and friendships were formed—old ones strengthened. The dinner and the day soon over, the holidays gone, Walter returned to his work in school and pulpit—visiting Mrs. Wellington and Maud on the way.

During the following weeks, Claude Sharon came from Lockwood to visit him, strong as ever in his faith and devotion.

Notwithstanding his struggle against poverty and a lurking consumption—deprived of educational advantages—he had acquired a rare mental training and fund of knowledge by improving his spare moments. He had come to tell Walter of his growing conviction of duty and willing surrender to preach the gospel.

"Fate seems to have been against me, Walter," he remarked, as they strolled, arm in arm, away from the town to the woods beyond; "but if I have only one talent and one opportunity to use it, I am resolved to do my best."

"You have this to encourage and help you, Claude," said Walter, "if you have not a classical education it is very practical and quite diversified. Your love for and familiarity with the Scriptures and your habits of prayer are *first, last and always* the best qualifications for preaching the gospel. Without these all other endowments and acquirements will not insure ministerial success, according to the Divine ideal.

"I have volumes of Spurgeon's sermons which I read with great profit. I love to notice that, while they do not exhibit the intellectual strength and mental training displayed by some

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ministers, they glow with the reflection of a mind and heart divinely illumined.

“Then there is that young man in Chicago—D. L. Moody—who is exerting such an influence and developing great faith and pulpit power. I will not be surprised if he astonishes all Christendom with his achievements in preaching the gospel. But he is very illiterate. When I heard him I was wonderfully moved in spirit although greatly annoyed by his improper use of verbs and pronouns.

“It was the influence of his short address to the students that sent me home from college last year to hold ‘open-air meetings’ in Lockwood. He urged that we employ unusual methods, if people cannot be won to Christ through the ordinary means.

“Forgetting my youth and that I would be ‘a prophet in my own country,’ I went to win—if I might—a few, at least, of my friends and early associates to that Saviour who has done so much for me.”

“Your coming,” remarked Claude, “did me a much needed good—leading me to the decision of which I told you as to my life work. I heard many testify to the blessings received, so that, instead of losing honor, you gained it by coming.”

“I was pleased,” said Walter, “to see good old Deacon Cox in the audience that thronged into the church after the ‘open-air services.’ He was my first Sunday school teacher; he seemed to drink in every word I said and sanction it, just as I did when he taught me my first lessons in Sunday school.

“You must keep up good courage, Claude! You will be guided! To be good is better than to be great! To be saved is better than to be rich!”

Claude returned to Lockwood. Walter soon after completed his school teaching engagement and resigned his pulpit work to the regular minister who had recovered from his injury. While returning to his father’s home he visited Mary Pendleton. The few delightful hours thus spent with his former teacher were never to be repeated. Her life work terminated after a few more years of usefulness. In his mind and character, Walter realized he bore some of the fruits of her faithful teaching.

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At home on the farm he found much needed rest in change of labor from the study and school room to that among the flocks and in the fields.

While thus engaged, a "call"—that seemed like an inspiration—came from a church in the suburbs of a large city. To accept would mean, possibly, a failure to resume his college studies; in this he was helped to a prompt decision by the condition of his eyes, which, thus far, medical skill had failed to restore.

To accept would take him far from home and friends. At this point he hesitated; but prayer enlarged his vision and he was made to feel—as never before—where God is, His servant is "at home," and God is everywhere. After that he could as cheerfully have accepted a call to China or the Islands of the Sea as the one he did now willingly accept. Although yet two years under his "majority," his father cheerfully relinquished every claim he may have legally had upon his time or labor. Fondly hoping his college days were not ended he began preparing for his departure.

The rush of summer harvesting was over, in which he had been assisting his father and brothers. As he returned for the last time from the fields, he rested himself at the old well curb and cast a glance over their broad expanse. Many a point and object recalled an incident—a pleasant experience or a painful accident.

Yonder was where he stood when a neighbor boy hunting with him accidentally discharged a gun—the contents of which tore up the ground almost under Walter's feet. It seemed to him at the time like an averted judgment sent to warn him against Sabbath desecration.

Yonder, the well, from which—with pole and pail—he had drawn water for the thirsty herds and flocks hot summer days—the well into which also the old white family horse had fallen, nearly carrying him with her, and from which the poor beast was extricated with greatest difficulty.

Often had he rested for a few moments—peeping between the pages of a book—escaping the scorching rays of the sun

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under the shade of that old tree—standing in the meadow stubble, like a lone sentinel, to defy the cyclones and lightnings that had twisted its branches and riven its trunk. How many times he had held the plow handles—even when so small he reached his hands up to grasp them—walking in the furrowed path, watching the plowshare turn the flat, green sod so gracefully, with neither stump nor stone to hinder.

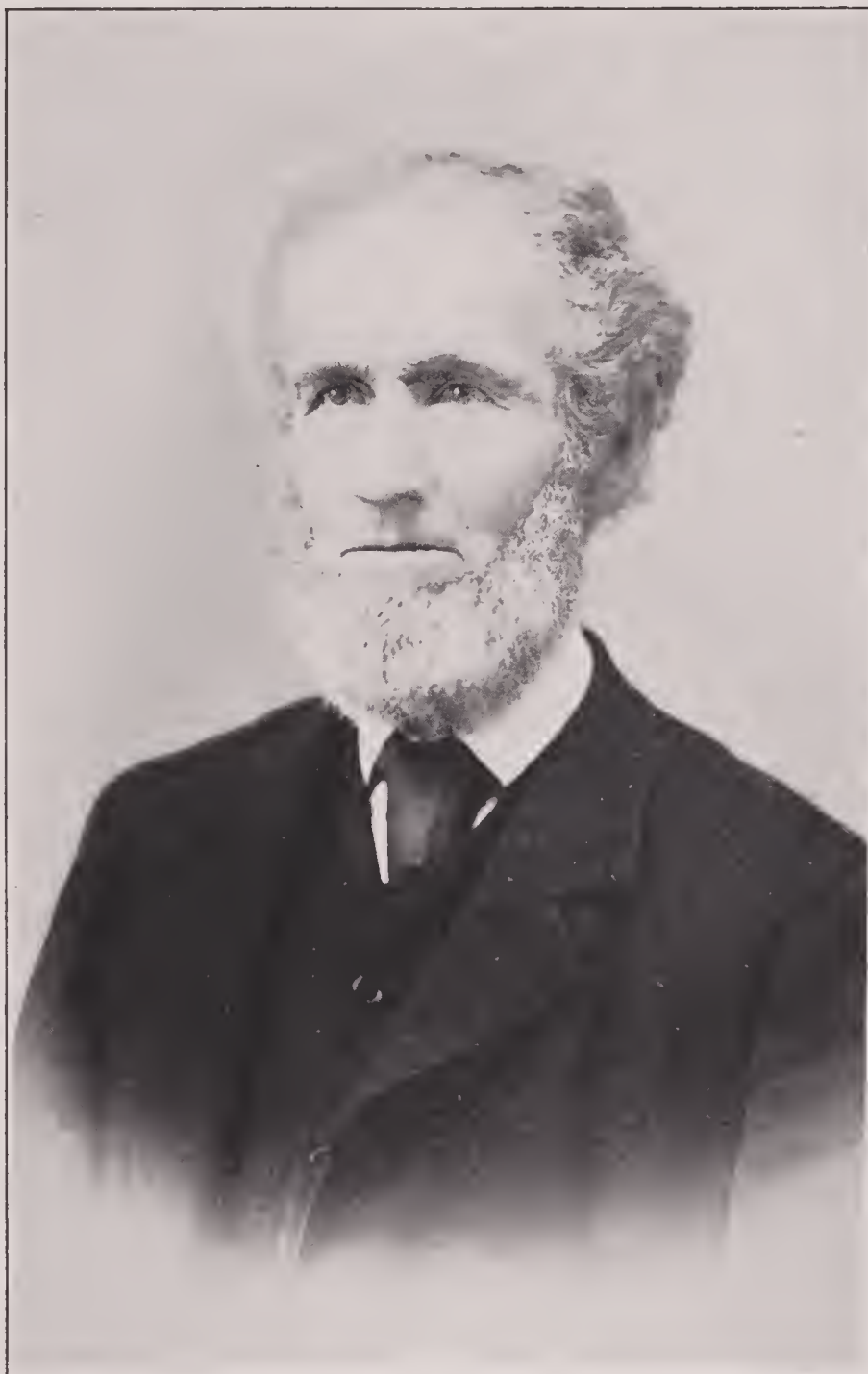
What a time for reflection and communion with nature had it been, as the horses plodded slowly across the level fields!

There stood the fence—almost every post a writing desk—on which he had placed his note book to jot down his reflections and arguments, when he came to the end of a furrow or corn row—at noon or evenings to be written out for use in college orations or debates, sermons and addresses. Around how many spots clustered sweet recollections of spiritual victories, while kneeling between the tall corn rows in prayer, while the horse stood quietly resting—in brute ignorance of the heavenly transports of a human soul when blessed of God.

One more picture—memory's hand portrayed before his mind—was that scene on summer afternoons when—accompanied by their mother—Rosamond, Martin and he had strolled through the meadows, gathering wild strawberries for supper.

The chirrup of the meadow lark; the trill of the bob-o-link; the whir-r-r of the quail or prairie hen, frightened from their nests, then alighting to flutter away like a wounded bird, to lead the pursuers from their treasures; the hum of the bees among the clover blossoms and wild roses; then the delight of the weary harvesters as they sat down to refresh themselves at the evening meal, with the relish of strawberries, white with sugar and covered with cream from the cool cellar; the perfume of wild flowers in the old pitcher on the mantle, filling the room; all this—and more—were things of the past, never to come to him again—never.

All the pleasant views before him would soon be out of sight, to be seen only as photographed on memory's page; and yet, as he awoke from his reverie, Walter said reverently, "not my will, but Thine be done!" As he stepped out from the calm,



“SANFORD SEELY”
“The Aged Retired Farmer”
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cool shadow of the old well curb into the sunlight he said aloud,

“Where He leads,

I’ll follow, follow everywhere.”

Gathering a handful of ripe cherries as he passed the trees—which he had assisted his father and Edward in planting—he entered the house and prepared for dinner, after which his step-mother—with a kindness of manner, a union of blood could not have excelled—prepared his linen for packing in his trunk, after which he went to spend a few hours with Rosamond in her home on the adjoining farm. He found her alone. Clarence and his hired man had gone to the field. The children were in the bedroom asleep.

“As I am to engage so soon in regular church work, I thought I would make a ‘pastoral call’ on you, Rosamond, before going away,” Walter said, laughingly, as he entered the open door and dropped upon the sofa, near which his sister was sitting with her sewing.

“I am glad you have come; ministers do not come here very often—only one, in fact, has called since we moved into this house almost three years ago,” she said, sadly.

“Rosamond, do the ministers in Lockwood know you would like to have them call?” Walter inquired.

“Why—no!” she answered; “they do not know much about us. We seldom ever attend church. I suppose that accounts for their not coming to see us.”

“But why do you not attend public worship more?” asked Walter kindly. “Clarence has plenty of horses and an easy carriage; your children are small, it is true; others take children to church equally as small.” After waiting a moment for an answer, which she seemed reluctant to give, he added—as he looked through the open doorway toward Lockwood—“how plainly you can see the church spires!”

“Yes,” she replied, “they can be seen very plainly. When I hear the bells ringing on quiet Sunday mornings I wish it were so I could go; but”—she hesitated, as if struggling with something she wished to say, yet shrank from uttering it.

“But what, Rosamond?” asked Walter. “It certainly can-

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not be a matter of dress, for the people at the church where Mr. Vinton preaches are very plain, although abundantly able to dress elegantly; they do not think the church a place for display, but to worship God. You certainly can dress as well as they do!"

"No, Walter," she answered, "it is not a matter of dress. You remember after our little boy died Clarence took me to church quite often; when he began working so hard—plowing and sowing—he felt very weary Sunday mornings and began to neglect it. I am sure we were better and happier for going. If you leave us, Walter, I do not know what will become of us!"

"I am sorry, Rosamond," said Walter. "I have often regretted that Clarence did not unite with the temperance society in Lockwood. I invited him to do so, but he said he feared he could not keep the pledge. What does he think about it now?"

"He does not say much about it," she replied; then—after a moment's pause—added: "I do wish it was not so far to Plainwell, so he could do his trading there, where they have no saloons or taverns into which men can be persuaded to go and drink liquor."

"If everyone would sign the pledge, Rosamond, they would not enter the saloons, nor drink intoxicating beverages," suggested Walter.

"They would not if they kept their pledge," Rosamond replied; "but when a man has an appetite for alcoholic drink it is very hard to control himself when he sees or smells it. You know there are men standing ready to offer it to him and coax—even threaten—until he yields! When a man has tried to keep his promise to abstain, and has failed so often, he becomes discouraged—especially when the craving and temptation to drink are ever present."

Observing how greatly Rosamond was troubled by the thoughts awakened by the trend of their conversation, Walter led her mind in other channels. When the little children had awakened he spent another hour enjoying a merry romp with them. Returning home in time for tea he finished packing his trunk, after which his father drove with him to Lockwood.

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All the farewells had been tearful, yet cheerful; their echoes sounded in his ears long after the train had borne him away from life-long friends to find a home and friends among strangers—fields also where he was to sow spiritual seed for spiritual harvests.

One thought came to him over and again—growing out of Rosamond's remarks. Had not Clarence given her painful proofs of what she had spoken? Was it not *he* who had so often promised her to abstain? A promise no more solemn and binding when made to God than when a man makes it to his wife. Had he not as often broken his promise, lost his will power, and—feeling himself again the slave of appetite—yielded to each temptation? Had *she* not been bearing her sorrow alone—pitying, forgiving, still loving the lover of her youth—the father of her children, while he was censured and cast off by others, who knew his course of life? Had not the ministers and Christian people, on his account, ceased to call at their house, concluding—because he chose such company as he associated with—he did not care for theirs? Had not Rosamond suffered the consequences of her husband's wrong doings and like him been neglected by good people?

Out of these reflections Walter Seely evolved a practical lesson not taught at college from homiletic or theological text books. It suggested to him a line of duty; he resolved to follow. Sleeping and dreaming, waking and thinking, he passed the night while the train sped on under the silent stars.

Now a stop; a bustle of passengers getting on or off the cars! Words of greeting and laughter; words of parting and tears!

The sun and day came at length, and his journey's end. He had been called to work; here was the vineyard.

CHAPTER XXV.

INFIDEL AND INVALID.

The faces and names of those in his church, congregation and Sunday school soon became familiar to Walter as those of his own family at home.

His youthful appearance interested those of mature years and evoked their sympathies, while he gained easy access to the young. Little children flocked around him; young men and women regarded him as a companion. The Sunday school increased in numbers and interest. The congregation filled the sanctuary; a revival spirit prevailed; soon large numbers were professing their hearts renewed and seeking admission to church fellowship.

"I see you have a new minister," said Mr. Hall to one of the leading members of the church.

"I surmised it was he, but his extremely youthful appearance surprised me when I met him coming from the postoffice. He appears, however, to be a very genial young gentleman. I shall be pleased to form his acquaintance and have a talk with him."

So saying—with a peculiar smirk upon his face and a tone in his voice bordering on sarcasm—he passed into the City National Bank, of which he was the cashier. Walter Seely was informed that Mr. Hall was a shrewd business man, but strictly honest in all his transactions.

His domestic relations were harmonious and beautiful. Mrs. Hall had become an invalid during the earlier years of her marriage and motherhood. The intelligent faith and piety that marked her girlhood remained and added beauty and strength to her womanhood, notwithstanding her bodily frailty.

Her children were her pride and joy. Her husband was kind but he did not enjoy the spirituality that marked her life nor did he accept her views concerning religion. He bitterly opposed

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churches and ministers; he read the Bible and attended church occasionally, only to criticise and ridicule both; hence his expressed desire to become acquainted with the young minister was that he might engage him in a controversy and add another to the long list of clergymen whom he had worsted—as he claimed—in argument concerning the Bible, and persons and institutions connected with it.

Nor were his victories mere assumptions, for again and again had one minister after another been compelled to retreat before the just and truthful accusations brought by Mr. Hall against the misconduct of many church members, and even some ministers, or the latter had found themselves unable to answer his many questions and arguments presented to them, with a seemingly sincere desire to know the truth. Their failure to meet his inquiries satisfactorily resulted in their own humiliation and increased the arrogant feelings and manner of Mr. Hall.

Walter Seely had recently come from college and a short time spent in teaching. Although but twenty years of age, he had received and accepted a “call” to become the pastor of the suburban church in K——.

Hardly a fortnight had passed when he and one of his parishioners—while walking along a main avenue—met Mr. Hall; after an introduction by their mutual acquaintance and a few common-place remarks, Walter discovered something in the manner of the dignified appearing business man before him, that seemed to chill him through and through. It was not the absence of an apparent cordiality, nor of language that possessed the tokens of a gentleman and scholar.

The brief interview ended—the young pastor and his friend went on their way calling on various members of the church. After leaving Mr. Hall, however, Walter could not forbear inquiring particularly about him and was informed that he was a pronounced unbeliever relative to the Bible and Christianity. He was the head and active leader of a band of skeptics residing in the city.

Feeling his knowledge and experience were so limited he was

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not qualified to cope successfully with so formidable an opponent in argument, Walter studiously avoided meeting him under any circumstances that were likely to lead to a profitless discussion.

He became deeply interested in and concerned for Mr. Hall however; he prayed and invited several others to unite with him that by some means God would remove unbelief from the infidel's mind and heart.

The faith of each was greatly strengthened; their joy was angelic when at length the answer to their prayers was clearly shown.

To Walter the increasing attendance of young people at the church service was an inspiration. The preceding summer months had been full of song and gladness for them under the leadership of P. P. Bliss, the celebrated singer and writer of gospel hymns. The well trained voices of so many added greatly to the drawing influence of the union revival services, conducted by the young minister and the white-haired pastor of another church, during which most of the young people not formerly Christians took their stand for a Christian life. A new note of gladness entered their singing insomuch that their great song leader, who came to spend a short season among them, exclaimed: "I thought last summer you young people sang like angels, but now you sing with the joy of archangels."

As the interest deepened at the church and spread through the city the aged people and invalids who could not attend church were reached by holding "cottage meetings" at their homes.

Out of regard for his wife—whom he fondly loved—Mr. Hall consented to her inviting such a meeting to be held in their home, although he absented himself on the plea of business. The angelic face, the deeply spiritual prayer and testimony from the lips of Mrs. Hall spoken with a voice so confident and tender—produced an impression that fell like a benediction on those who thronged her beautiful home that midwinter afternoon. To each and all her patient submission in suffering—such as they were strangers to—was an object lesson of the Saviour's sustaining love. All felt that only one thing was

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lacking, at which she had vaguely hinted—her husband's conversion—to cause her cup of joy to overflow. Their little daughter was heaven's appointed messenger to lead her father into the kingdom.

Week after week the revival services continued with unabated interest. From the first Mr. Hall studiously withheld his presence, which caused the faith of many who were praying for him to waver. On the last night, however, before the extra services closed, the congregation was amazed to see him enter the church door.

Holding in his, the clinging hand of his little ten-year-old daughter, Nellie, he followed the usher to one of the few remaining vacant pews at the front of the church.

An expression of hope and renewed assurance spread over the faces of those who had been united in prayer for him. On Nellie's countenance was an unspeakable look of happy triumph.

Alone with her mother, she also had prayed for her father. In the children's meetings, conducted each day by the young pastor—assisted by the aged minister's wife, as well as in the crowded church at night, her gentle, childish voice had been heard again and again in prayer or confessing the Saviour's love, with a sweetness and power that melted strong men and women to tears.

"What a wonderful child!" "How sweet!" "Heaven bless her!" Such were the half audible exclamations heard in the pews and pulpit as the people and pastors listened to her.

A profound solemnity rested on the congregation as the services proceeded. Even the volume of joyful song seemed burdened with an undertone of deep yearning for the unsaved—especially for the one whose presence awakened the query in many minds whether he had been drawn there as an interested inquirer in answer to their prayers, or had he come to please his wife and child, meanwhile gathering new material for argument and criticism at the Infidel Club?

The young minister finished his sermon; he paused a moment, then broke the prevailing stillness by asking all who would to bow in silent prayer.

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His eyes were filled with tears as he glanced over the bowed heads of the congregation. Here and there he saw a few men and women sitting upright—among them was Mr. Hall. With trembling voice the minister said:

“My friends! Will you who feel that you are not Christians decide now to come with us? We are your friends. We wish you each to enjoy what has done others so much good. Your Saviour is waiting to welcome you to the enjoyment of His love and service. Will you rise in your places for a moment, thus expressing your desire and purpose?”

One after another responded.

Taking one of his hands in hers, little Nellie, with a smile, looked up into her father's face and whispered loud enough to be heard in the pulpit: “Papa! Won't you please rise and stand with me?”

A dark frown shadowed his face, as he looked down at her and shook his head. She drew her hands from his, as if she had been hurt; covering her face with them her little body shook with emotion and scarcely suppressed sobs while her tears fell upon the Bible lying in her lap.

A strange expression and deathly paleness passed over the face of Mr. Hall. He trembled violently, as the appeals, in a few kindly spoken words still came from the lips of the minister. Again Nellie became calm and raised her tear-stained face toward her father's; taking his hand in hers as before, she said: “Papa! You will stand up for Jesus with me now, won't you?”

He looked into her face for a few seconds, then bowed his consent, and father and child stood up together.

As those who were standing resumed their seats, the congregation joined in a song of gladness led by the young minister. At the close of the service many were the warm-hearted “hand-shakes” extended to Mr. Hall as he passed from the church with his little daughter, whose face was radiant with joy. Just as he was passing out of the door, he said to Walter, who was there speaking to each person who passed out:

“Mr. Seely! I have done a strange thing for me tonight; I

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hardly know what to think of myself. I desire, however, to thank you for the interest you have manifested in my family; I shall be pleased to have you take tea with us tomorrow evening."

In fulfillment of his acceptance of the invitation, Walter—hoping for the best, yet with misgivings as to what the result might be, went at the appointed hour to the home of Mr. Hall.

Nellie met him at the door and ushered him into the parlor, where her mother was reclining upon a couch. Although very feeble, she found strength to shake his hand cordially and express the joy the knowledge of her husband's act the night before had caused her to feel.

Mr. Hall soon entered the room; in a very subdued manner he most politely greeted and helped entertain their guest during the social hour and at the tea that followed.

At the close of the entertainment Mr. Hall, accompanied by Nellie and her little brother, invited Walter into the library. On the book shelves were volumes of poetry, history, science, well interspersed with works of noted so-called "Freethinkers." When they were seated Mr. Hall said to his visitor:

"Mr. Seely! A new desire and sense of duty has taken possession of me during the past month. I cannot account for it. My theories of life and religion have faded away; the arguments with which I sought to fortify myself and attack the Bible, church and ministry seem to lack strength.

"I once thought my position impregnable, but I often wondered why the great humane movements of the age, which every honest person interested in what makes for the betterment of mankind, must admire, are mostly originated and fostered by ministers and churches and those in accord with them.

"Again I must admit that—with rare exceptions—your church people are among our best citizens. Indeed, in my own home, I have two living arguments against my views which I have been free to express publicly against the Bible, Christianity and prayer."

He cast an admiring glance at his young daughter standing by his side—as if she was one of the "arguments"—and added:

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"I have often wondered how my wife could endure her sufferings and still maintain a disposition so patient and a manner so gentle, unless, after all my doubting and denials, there is an unseen Power that affords her strength in answer to prayer. Admitting these things, I cannot honestly antagonize nor neglect them any longer.

"But, sir!" he exclaimed, with a tone of agony in his voice, "it is a crucifixion, like death to me, to humble my pride and openly confess my errors and embrace and defend that which I have opposed so long. How can I do it?"

He remained silent for a moment, then gave way to violent weeping. His children were alarmed to see their father weep.

Walter Seely, who had never witnessed such an exhibition of mental anguish, sat silently praying for wisdom to guide this strong-minded man, now so broken-hearted.

Nellie put her arms around her father's neck and said, soothingly: "Papa! Jesus will help you; I asked Him last night to help you stand in church and He did. When the revival began mamma and I and many others united to pray that you might think differently, and you do.

"One night last week I dreamed you were a Christian. I was so happy I woke up; I was sorry it was only a dream. I arose and knelt on my bed while you and mamma were asleep.

"I looked out of the window; the moon was shining so brightly it seemed as if I could look right into heaven. I prayed that you might be converted during this revival and——"

"Yes, my little angel," Mr. Hall exclaimed, interrupting her with trembling voice, "I remember it; I heard you praying, 'dear Jesus, won't you please convert my papa and take away his unbelief.'

"When you had fallen asleep again, I got up and walked the floor until daylight, thinking and wishing I enjoyed the faith and comfort you and your mamma possess! But can I?"

Walter Seely listened to this conversation. While he felt the child was a safe guide to her father, he said:

"Mr. Hall, the way may appear dark and the cross seem heavy, but Christ said: 'If any man *will* do the will of God, he

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shall know the doctrine;' again He said, 'he that confesseth Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven.'

"Are you willing to follow the leadings of God, 'who worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure?' Will you also accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and confess Him before men?"

Calming his emotions, Mr. Hall crossed the room and extending his hand to Walter, who clasped it in both of his, he said: "Mr. Seely, I *will*, and I implore you to continue to unite with my wife and child in prayer to God that I may have courage and strength to do right and undo as far as may be the wrongs I have done.

"The church bell is now ringing; I will accompany you to church and by God's help I will publicly announce my change of ideas and my new life purposes."

It was a fearful and heroic struggle to do so, but faithfully he kept his promise, to the great joy of the church and the surprise and consternation of those whom he had led in infidelity.

With a peace of mind and sense of right he had never felt before, Mr. Hall returned to his home that night. Before the family retired he called for a Bible, saying: "I am resolved to seek Christ until I find Him. I will begin reading the Bible with you."

Turning to the fifty-first Psalm he read it slowly, verse after verse—his emotions at times choking his utterance.

When he had finished the reading he knelt with the children, while his wife, reclining on her invalid couch, led in a fervent prayer. Nellie's childish voice followed her mother's. No sooner had she ceased than Mr. Hall, for the first time in his life, called on God aloud in prayer—a prayer full of sorrow and confession; his tears flowed freely; he utterly forgot his surroundings.

At last the clouds cleared from his spiritual sky; the burden that weighed so heavily upon his conscience rolled away; the moments passed unheeded as his confession turned to prayer and supplication and then broke forth in joyful thanksgiving.

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An hour had passed since he knelt to pray. He rose to his feet to find his children calmly sleeping by the chairs at which they had knelt, while his wife lay in a swoon.

The unspeakable joy that had come to her after the long "deferred hope, that had made her heart sick," was too much for her weak condition; she had fainted.

Filled with alarm lest his new found joy should prove to be the forerunner of a great sorrow, he hastened to feel her pulse and heart; taking courage to hope for the best when he felt them feebly beating he hastily procured and administered restoratives. Ere long she opened her eyes; recalling what had occurred, as her strength returned, she whispered into her husband's ears fitting words of encouragement and comfort.

He awakened the children and helped them prepare for bed and needed sleep.

As for him and his wife, it seemed there was no sleep. Their joy was too great; they had come to know and love each other as never before.

The gulf that long had separated them was bridged. Their otherwise happy home seemed to be taking on the impress and influence of eternal joy. The following day was the beginning of days in their family life; days that grew brighter and brighter, even beneath the shadows of suffering and losses that seemed to multiply upon them as never before.

Mr. Hall bravely but humbly proclaimed his new found faith and happiness. His influence grew and was felt for good, far and near as the years went by.

When Mrs. Hall passed to her reward it was a sad parting, yet bright with the hope of meeting again in realms of eternal day, and not the sad separation of an "Infidel and Invalid."

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUT OF THE SNARE.

In the midst of this awakening Walter observed most of the young men of the congregation were making but little advancement in the way of reform and religion.

He soon had painful proofs that many of them were frequenting saloons, gambling and drinking.

A few had risen in the public meetings and in other ways expressed a desire to become Christians. Leaving the church with deep concern expressed upon their faces they would return the following evening with an air of indifference.

Deeply perplexed for a time as to the cause, he finally hit upon the true solution and for a remedy resolved upon a certain course of action. Accosting one of the young men before the service began he said to him privately:

“Will you and the other young men come to my rooms after the services close tonight?”

“We—yes—well—to tell the truth, we can’t very well, Mr. Seely!” he replied, as his face flushed deeply. “We have an engagement tonight.”

“Why not let *me* go with *you*, then? The boys told me the other day they would count me in as one of their number when they were going to have a jolly time!” remarked Walter with a quiet laugh.

“All right then,” remarked the young man, coloring still more deeply as Walter pressed the matter.

“Will you tell the others and wait for me until the congregation is gone?” Walter requested of him.

“Yes, sir,” he replied, and Walter entered the pulpit to conduct the services of the evening. At the close he found the young man waiting for him in the vestibule.

“Where are the rest of the young men?” Walter inquired, as they stepped out upon the walk.

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"They have gone, Mr. Seely. I will go and spend the rest of the evening with you alone. The others wished me to have you excuse them," the young man answered and was about to turn the corner leading toward Walter's room.

Not to be thwarted thus—concluding no principle of courtesy would be violated, a sense of duty to rescue the tempted ones from danger impelling him—he said, pleasantly:

"That is not fair, Johnnie! 'The more the merrier!' If *you* and *I* were going to have a nice time somewhere we would want *them* present. If *they* are having a jolly time *we* want to be with them! Is not that fair?"

"It seems so!" the young man replied.

"Well, then, let us go and find them!" saying which Walter slipped his arm through that of his companion and turned down the business street; they found the stores all closed. Passing several places where liquor was sold—hearing no noise inside—they went on until they came to an open door at the foot of a stairway opening on a back street and leading to an upper room.

"Ah, ha, this is the place!" said Walter, as they heard familiar voices. "You lead the way and I will follow."

Thus urged, the young man began reluctantly to ascend the stairs.

"You will stand by me, won't you, Johnnie?" Walter asked of him, in a half audible voice, when part way up the stairs.

For the first time he began to realize into what possible difficulties and dangers he might be entering; before he could receive an answer, he heard someone say in a bantering tone, "Hello, Johnnie! Have you come? Where is Brother Seely?" Several voices took up the inquiry as the young man reached the head of the stairs that opened directly into the room.

"He is coming!" was the half indignant, half laughing reply.

"Yes, here I am, boys!" said Walter, as his head rose above the floor and his eyes took in at a single glance a large, low room. In one front corner was a bar and shelves filled with bottles. A burly looking Irishman in his shirt sleeves was mixing some-

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thing to drink. Fancy pictures were hanging upon the walls—mostly cheap prints of the “nude in art.”

In another corner was a stove; in another a table, around which sat a dozen young men, of ages ranging from fifteen to twenty years, some of whom were playing cards, the rest looking on, while all were smoking cigars or pipes.

By the stove sat a miserable wreck of a man—bloated and blear-eyed, red faced and ragged. Walter had seen him during the day, going from house to house, with a “kit” of old tools seeking odd jobs of mending tinware.

Quicker than it can be told the cards were swept into a drawer; the cigars and pipes were extinguished and hidden by the young men as soon as they caught a glimpse of Walter following their companion.

The bartender—who was also the proprietor of the miserable resort—looked from behind his bar to see who his new customer might be.

Stepping up in front of his bar, Walter extended his hand cordially. As the man slowly gave his hand in return—casting a look of surprise from under his shaggy eyebrows—Walter said: “How do you do, Mr. Fagan?” meantime shaking his hand vigorously across the bar.

“This is Mr. Seely, our minister!” said Walter’s companion, addressing Fagan.

“How is yer Riverence?” the saloon keeper said, in reply to the introduction and Walter’s salutation.

“The loikes of yees don’t come to me bar ivery day. To phwat can I trate yer Riverence?” he added, and began to set out the glasses and bottles.

“No, I thank you, Mr. Fagan; I do not need anything to drink. I just came in to spend a short time with my young friends over there. They visit me at the church, where I am always glad to see them; I have come to return their compliment.” Walter said this in a half jocular tone, loud enough so all the young men could hear it, then added: “I suppose your house is open and free to all!”

“Yis sor, yer Riverince! Onybody can cum and sthay

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as long as they please and every day in the week!—if they keep orderly like; but if they get n’isy I put ’em out.” This reply was followed by a loud, coarse laugh from the speaker, after which he added: “The law is very strict about n’ise; oive put mony a mon down thim stairs for roaring about, then the ‘cops’ clapped ’em in the ‘cooler’ quicker’n a wink—and some of ’em was illigint gentlemen”—then followed another coarse laugh and a knowing wink at Walter, as if in suggestive warning. His laugh seemed to be a self-applause, in laudation of his conduct as a law-abiding citizen.

To insure his good will still further and gain his assistance in impressing a lesson upon his young friends, Walter increased his good humor by saying: “I suppose then, Mr. Fagan, I can remain if I am ‘orderly;’ I shall be ‘put out’ if I am not?”

“Yis soir ree, yer Riverince, and may the saints preserve us!” he answered, laughing.

Turning away from the bar to join the group who had been listening to the conversation, Walter encountered the wretched man who had been sitting by the stove, but was just then coming to the bar, hoping to get his share if a free treat was to be offered.

Seeing, however, that Walter had no intention of “treating the crowd” he leaned against the bar—fumbling in his pockets to find a dime to buy a drink. While the bartender was busy mixing it, Walter went across the room to talk with the young men.

There he found the twin orphan boys who lived with their uncle; also Judge Schilling’s son, just returned from college. The parents of most of the group were church members.

“Go on, boys, finish your game!” said Walter. “I cannot play, for I do not know one card from another; but I suppose you will let me look on?”

“We are not playing cards, Mr. Seely,” said one of the boys, evasively.

“No, I see you are not; I guess you were playing when I came in! What was it you put in the drawer? These marks on the table! What are they for? Here are two marks—

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three—four—yonder seven. Well! well! Someone was getting ahead; too bad, boys, to spoil a victory! Why not finish the game?"

All this was said by Walter in such a vein of good humor the boys—though very much ashamed—began to laugh.

"How did you know we came *here*, Mr. Seely?" someone asked.

"I did not know *where* you went, but I knew you went somewhere after meeting to have a jolly time," said Walter, "so I came here with Johnnie. If we are to be 'boys' together, what is good for you is good for me."

"What made you bring him?" Walter overheard one of the boys asking in an undertone.

"I did not bring him; he brought himself and made me come along; it is a good joke on us, anyhow," the other remarked, and they both laughed softly.

The bartender and his wretched customer now came and joined the group.

"Do you have much business, Mr. Fagan?" Walter inquired, to ascertain if many people frequented the place.

"Not ivery day, yer Riverence; but them as loikes the 'craythur' comes rigelar and often," he replied.

"I suppose these boys are not very good customers at your bar are they? They come simply to visit and play games, do they not?" Walter further inquired.

"Oi won't decaive yer Riverince by saying as how they don't dhrink a grate dale, for young lads of the loikes of thim, whin they cum here for their fun; but yees can ax 'em; the whoal caboodle of thim are rigelar sthovepoipes for schmokin wid the!r poipes and segars," said Fagan—at which last remark the boys roared with laughter.

"How is it, boys?" asked Walter, smiling—after the laugh had subsided—as he looked to see how they enjoyed the saloon-keeper's affirmative answer—given in a negative form—to his question relative to their drinking habits.

"Well, I can't see any harm in an occasional glass," said Edwin Morton—one of the twin brothers. "I believe that a person should stop though when he has enough."

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“That ish jus’ what I s’ink” (hic), said the “tinker,” whose drams had now begun to make him talkative and thick-tongued; “I don’t b’l’ eve er man—orter (hic) sign er—way (hic) ’is lib’ty in this (hic) free—country.”

After the first sentence the boys all began to look at their new ally, while he was delivering his opinion with “hics” and hesitations, given in endorsement of Edwin Morton’s statement.

“Well, Edwin,” said Walter—somewhat ironically—“you have a strong endorser of your views,” at which remarks the rest of the boys then laughed again, loud and long. Fagan joined them in an uproarious voice. Edwin’s face turned scarlet with shame, because he had turned the laugh against himself. He was also filled with indignation toward the “tinker” for giving his stammering opinion unasked; but he—thinking the laughter was in approval of his remarks—took off his old hat, and—half rising in his chair—swung it over his head, shouting, “Hip! (hic) Hip! (hic) ’urrah—rah; set ’em up (hic) boys—”

Walter became alarmed, lest a policeman should be attracted by the noise at that late hour and come to arrest the whole company. After all had quieted down he said:

“Seriously, Edwin! How much is ‘enough?’ Would your idea of ‘enough’ be this poor man’s present idea, whatever he thought or desired at your age? Would not your ‘occasional glass’ lead where Mr. Fagan intimated when he said, ‘those who love the creature will come often for it?’ ”

“Yer roight, yer Riverince!” said Fagan—answering for Edwin—which Walter was very glad he did; “that’s the way it is; whin a young lad cums here a few toimes he soon begins to cum oftener and sthays longer. Isn’t that thrue, b’ys?” he asked, giving them a knowing wink and a wag of the head that told the whole story—of the wayward, rapidly downward course they had entered upon, notwithstanding the social and religious standing of most of their people, and the fact most every Sunday found all of them in Sunday school. Some of their friends had seen painful evidence of their dissipation when they were brought home in an intoxicated condition, but

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no one seemed to know what to say or do to put an end to it. Beardless youths—all of them—under the growing spell of the drink habit, formed little by little; formed when unsuspecting parents little dreamed where they were so late at night; they, often accepting—as truth—any false answer or explanation rather than show distrust of their word—if they felt any—or be to any trouble to prove their statements true or false.

The boys made no reply to Fagan's last remark; all sat a few moments—each engaged with his own thoughts—while Walter turned to Fagan and conversed with him about his business, drawing from him the admission, "it is a bad one."

He was led to say further: "I know, yer Riverince, dhrink does a dale o' harrum; I w'uld loike a more illigant thrade, but I must fade me woife and children an' cloathe 'em up in stoile."

"But do you think it right for such as these, my young friends, to visit saloons, gamble and drink liquor. Would you like your boys to do it?"

"Indade oi w'uld not!" he answered. "My ould woman bates thim ef she sees thim wid the corrick out o' the bottle phwat we keeps at the house wid a dhrap in it—when we have a pain, you know, we takes a little."

Looking at his watch, Walter saw it was after eleven o'clock. Hastily rising, he was about to leave the room—after bidding Fagan and the boys good night—when the latter all arose and followed him silently down the stairs, having dropped their unsmoked cigars in the sawdust on the saloon floor and leaving the pitcher of sling untouched which Fagan was preparing for them when he entered. The saloonkeeper and the poor old victim of his traffic constituted the sole remaining occupants of the room.

From the foot of the stairs the boys followed Walter until they reached the corner where he was to part from them.

As he stood looking at them for a moment they gathered around him, hedging up his way so he could not proceed. He scrutinized their faces closely, uncertain—in the dim light of the street lamp under which they were standing—what they

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were planning to do, almost wondering if they were intending to do him bodily harm.

Finally Edwin Morton said: "Mr. Seely, I want to thank you for following us boys tonight. I am heartily ashamed of what you saw us doing. I have learned a lesson, however. While I was mad enough at that old 'soak' to kill him, the old fool showed me that my ideas of 'moderate drinking' would bring me just where the same views and practices have brought him."

"Yes," said Johnnie Hamilton—who had accompanied Walter from the church to the saloon, "and didn't Fagan give us all away? I for one propose to make a clean breast of the whole matter! I now promise you, Mr. Seely," he added, offering his hand to Walter, who firmly grasped it, "you will not see me in a saloon again; I hope I have drunk my last glass of intoxicating liquor. I have been half drunk every day for six months, which is saying considerable for a boy only eighteen years old."

"So have I," said Edwin Morton's twin brother; "but now I join Johnny in his resolution."

He and each of the boys then shook hands with Walter, until it came Albert Shilling's turn, who had that evening risen for prayers at the church; hesitating, he said: "Mr. Seely, I cannot do this alone and I know it! I don't believe any of us boys can, unless we become Christians; that is what I want to be. Will you go somewhere and pray with us?"

Thus addressed, Walter thought to ask the boys to his rooms, but feared it would waken the family. The hotels were not the proper places. The church was dark and cold, and he had no key.

"Boys," he said, after a moment's thought, "God is everywhere! We can pray here!"

With bowed, uncovered heads, at the midnight hour—there, surrounded by that group, Walter Seely poured out his soul in prayer for them—each by name.

He could hardly speak—his mind was so filled with anxious solicitude; his heart was, however, full of joy over the result—thus far—of the experience of the evening.

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With a simple "good night," they quietly separated, to meet often in coming days, when most of the boys had come to know the peace and moral power enjoyed by the young minister.

Albert Schilling forcibly illustrated to his companions the importance and benefit of readiness for death, which soon came to him by the accidental discharge of a gun while hunting.

The new life upon which they entered called into useful exercise the musical and mental gifts the boys possessed, that were being rapidly ruined by dissipation.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING.

Passing up and down the streets of the great city near which he was preaching Walter became more and more impressed that ministers have much to do in restraining young men from frequenting saloons. He could not, however, fathom the wisdom—or lack of wisdom—of a public policy that found it advisable to sanction and protect such places by licensing them. The moral, social, physical, financial and domestic consequences of their existence were bad—only bad. How could it be that the money received for license justified their existence, when the expenses, crime and sorrow they cause so far exceed the money received?

He asked doctors, lawyers and business men for information. He studied statistics and reports; compared revenues from and cost produced by the liquor traffic—view it from whatever standpoint he would, one conclusion always forced itself upon his mind—the manufacture, the sale, the uses of alcoholic beverages, are wrong in principle, ruinous in practice; something not to be sanctioned and protected, but condemned and destroyed.

As the months faded into years, the sad tidings came to Walter from Lockwood that one and another whom he had seen sign the pledge had violated it. The temptations had not been removed from before them. Wherever they went—to the post-office, the store, the grocery, their work, or on a visit—they must perchance pass the saloon doors; the fumes of beer and the odor of whiskey inflamed their appetite.

Pretended friends stood ready, with smiles and blandishments, enticing them to take the fatal backward step. Those who had sought spiritual renewing after signing the pledge had stood firm against temptation, overcoming through a

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power—not human, but Divine—implanted within through faith, in answer to prayer.

Those who had relied upon their own strength, or the influence of their social or domestic environments, had fallen. Walter began to lose much of that unbounded confidence which he had at first placed in the “pledge,” as a means—in the face of ordinary temptations—of saving the reformed drunkard from returning to his cups and evil company.

The “pledge” he therefore came to consider ordinarily to be only a silken cord with which to bind the slumbering tiger—appetite.

Not to rise again, it must be slain or bound by the overmastering power of Divine influence implanted in the heart.

Among those whom he had seen happily converted under his ministry and received into the church was Mrs. Skains—a worse than widow—a drunkard’s wife. She was a middle-aged woman who often reminded him of Rosamond.

Her family at the time consisted of a daughter—eleven years, a son—fifteen, and another—Willis—aged twenty, who was the main support of the family, while the younger children attended school near the church. The house of worship where Walter preached, often became so thronged with people, no more could enter; but, driving carriages and wagons near the open windows, they would listen to the preaching and join in song with the congregation within.

Many present bore unmistakable signs of having led dissipated lives.

On one occasion, while presenting—in as fervid a manner as he could command—the great goodness and mercy of the Divine Being and His power and willingness to save the lost from every sin—one of the most abject looking mortals he had ever beheld rose from his seat and staggered through the aisle to the pulpit where Walter was standing. Reaching out his trembling hands he seized hold of Walter’s. With an appealing look—full of doubt and wild despair and longing—he said, with a stammering voice: “Do you—th—ink, sir, He wo—uld do that f—or me?”

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For a moment Walter stood and gazed into his face—so flushed and bloated; his watery eyes—so dull and bloodshot; at his uncombed hair; his ragged coat and pants—covered with mud. His beer laden, whiskey fumed breath came into Walter's face again and again.

The audience looked on the scene with astonishment, some with disgust for the disturber of the quiet order of the service.

“Could human help avail for him? If so, where were wife and children, parents or friends?” As these questions sped through Walter's mind there came, like the lightning's flash, the words, “vain is the help of man; vain this man's own strength!”

The poor suffering wretch broke the stillness of the moment by saying: “Oh, is there no help, no hope for me?”

Again Walter seemed to hear a voice—speaking now in his inmost soul—saying in glorious tones: “He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.”

Thrilled as with an inspiration by this sublime assurance—such as he had seldom felt before concerning another person's privileges through grace—he looked upon the man, wrecked and ruined by strong drink; filled with pity and hope for him, he said—now taking the man's hands in his own: “Yes, my poor, lost brother! Jesus died for you; God can save you and make you a pure and happy man!”

“Oh, if he only would; I would give a thousand worlds if I had them,” he said, as he drew his hands from Walter's; then putting them over his own face he sobbed aloud.

Closing the Bible, without finishing his sermon, Walter said to the people: “Let us pray for this man and he shall be saved, though it shall be as a ‘brand plucked from the burning’ or ‘one raised from the dead.’ ”

Kneeling beside him, Walter said to the man, “make your confessions to God and join your prayers with ours.”

For a few moments a volume of silent prayer ascended, the quiet broken only by the sobs of the man, and of some in the audience whose hearts had been touched by the tragic scene.

All felt that before them was a man in a life and death strug-

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gle, endeavoring to escape from the coils of a pitiless destroyer. One after another prayed aloud with trembling voices and tearful earnestness for a display of Divine grace and power in the man's salvation.

The meeting closed, many asking—in whispered inquiries—"who is he?" But few seemed to know him; to Walter he was a total stranger; still he clung to him, desiring to learn more of him and his history.

Feeling a hand upon his arm, Walter turned and saw Mrs. Skains—the mother, who, with her two sons and little daughter, had lately been added to his flock. Her daughter was standing by her side; a look of shame and dread was stamped upon their faces.

"Do not mind him, Mr. Seely!" said the mother in whispered words; "he is beyond all help or hope because of drink. He is my husband. We have tried to save him, but have failed each time; there is no use trying again."

"But you have tried hitherto in your own power alone, as a woman and a wife—a weak mortal at best! 'Vain is the help of man.' Will you not try once more, in the exercise of the new found power, that has so lately come into your own soul and given you control over your own sins and self? Take him to your home once more, if only once!" Walter had addressed her in a voice, low and pleading, having turned away from the man.

Her face softened; her little daughter—who heard the conversation—cast an inquiring glance at her, half in hopes her mother would try once more to save him, and yet fear sprang up in her young heart when she looked at her wretched father.

"I do not think Willis, my oldest son, will consent to his going home with us," said Mrs. Skains. "He has wronged the poor boy so often; but I will ask him," she added, and went in search of him near the church door.

While she was gone Walter led her husband to a seat near the stove. His wife soon returned with her son, who said, very decidedly, in reply to Walter's request:

"Mr. Seely, it is no use! It is all time and sympathy thrown

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away. Before I was born he was a drunkard; he has beaten and abused me and my brother and sister; he has wronged and impoverished and starved my mother in days gone by. Years ago he began to desert us, returning—only now and then—but to consume what we had saved. Mother toiled for me when I was helpless; now, while I am able to prevent it, she shall never suffer abuse nor want.”

Walter could not help but admire the young man, for the noble sentiment of love and honor expressed toward his mother, which glowed in every lineament of his face, and he felt impressed to procure—if possible—one more trial for the outcast husband and father from him and the rest of the family.

“You are trying to be a Christian!” Walter said to Willis; “you have found a peace and strength you never felt until of late by which to resist temptation. You also feel a generous impulse—a spirit of benevolence, you never felt until now.”

The young man admitted that all his young pastor had said was true in his case.

“I presume,” added Walter, “you as a family will not object to *my* accompanying you home and becoming your guest for the night.”

“Most certainly not!” he and his mother both replied, “we will be pleased to have you come with us if you will accept our plain hospitality.”

“But I have a friend here tonight,” said Walter slowly, “whom I wish to accompany me. We can—with your permission—occupy the same bed, Mrs. Skains; and I fully believe you will be so pleased with my friend after this night you will want him to remain, even more than you will me.”

The family was greatly puzzled as to whom Walter meant. All had left the church except the little family group who were the objects of his planning. Having lain in a barn all that cold day, in a drunken state, the man came into the church—having had no supper nor dinner—that he might become warm. How dreadful to go out now into the frosty night—no suitable place to sleep. The thought of this, to Walter, was unbearable; pointing toward him, as he sat by the stove—with his head

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bowed down, the picture of sin, despair and want—he said, with his eyes swimming in tears: “Willis, there is my poor friend—your father! Will you not honor him once more as you honor me? Let me bring him to your house with me?”

Willis’s mother—her eyes filled with tears also, her old sympathy for her husband returning—said, however: “Mr. Seely, we have no bed for him; you certainly would not be willing to allow him to occupy a bed with you in the condition he is?”

“I *am* willing, a thousand times more than willing, rather than have him sleep in jail or lie out on a cold pavement this bleak night! Can he come?”

“Mr. Seely, if you feel that way, *he can come*,” said Willis, and the family turned and left the church.

Hastily putting on his coat and gloves, Walter aroused the man from the half drunken stupor into which he had fallen, and said: “Come, Mr. Skains, I am going to stay with your wife and children tonight, and you are to go with me.”

“What, me?” he asked, in a bewildered manner. “I stay with my wife and children tonight? Oh, I am not fit; it cannot be! I am too bad, too bad! They will not receive me.” Sitting down again, he began to sob.

“Come, now, no more of this,” said Walter, speaking with firmness, as he grasped his arm.

“Brace up, be a man, and God and man will help you;” so saying, he took his arm and together they followed the family home.

Walter drew from him his life story—in broken sentences at first, until the cool, clear air revived him, as they walked together.

A history was his, full of sin and sorrow. Self-sufficient at first, he boasted that he “could drink or let it alone,” as he chose; but he chose to drink; soon he had no power of choice, but felt compelled by appetite to indulge more and more, until the one, all absorbing cry of his flesh was for drink—drink, more and stronger drink. His every waking thought was, how he could obtain it. Earnings, home, everything had gone to secure it. Nearly all his wife and children had earned or

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friends had bestowed, had been filched away from them to satiate his undying thirst, until his oldest son, on approaching manhood, had rebelled against such extortion and driven him from home.

"It is just," he said. "I do not blame my wife and children. They are better off when I am away. I am not worthy to enter their home; for it is theirs and not mine; they have made it. I am not worthy to live; I am not fit to die; I have forfeited heaven; and oh, sir, I *dread* the doom I know awaits the drunkard."

"There is only one hope for you, Mr. Skains—and there *is one hope*; you must confess your guilt and weakness to God. By drinking—even *but moderately*—you have sinned against Him; you must ask for pardon. You have weakened your every power and faculty. God only can give you strength. Do you believe it?" Walter asked, encouragingly.

"I do, Mr. Seely," he replied, just as they reached the gate. The family was already there and had lighted the lamps and kindled the fire. The scene beheld through the window melted the heart of Mr. Skains anew. The curtain had been left up and the lamp shed its light upon the path leading from the gate.

"I am not worthy to enter there," he cried, with choking voice, as he halted near the steps.

"You must go in, Mr. Skains," said Walter, urging him forward. "Improve the present; make a right use of the future and the past will be forgiven."

His little daughter opened the door as she heard their footsteps on the porch.

What a scene greeted their eyes as they entered the cozy room, with its carpeted floor and plain, strong furniture. Beautiful pictures hung on the neatly papered walls. The soft light and warmth soon soothed Mr. Skains' agitated, trembling nerves, weakened by exposure and hunger. He sat in an easy chair his son had drawn near the fire for him. The tears rolled silently down his haggard, unshaved face, as he sat gazing into the blazing fire.

"I will get you some supper, John!" Mrs. Skains said, ten-

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derly, after she had taken Walter's overcoat—an article her husband did not possess. His hungry look followed her as she left the room. When the fragrant odors of food and steaming coffee came through the open kitchen door, he turned to his daughter and said:

“Minnie, will you show me where I can wash my hands and face? I have been a stranger so long I do not know where to go; my hands are too unsteady to shave myself tonight,” he added—drawing his hand over his bristly face.

In a few minutes he was shown into a tidy bedroom. When he had bathed, and put on clean wearing apparel, which his son—now his equal in size—had kindly furnished him, he sat down at the table to partake of the much needed refreshments his wife had prepared for them all. Many months had passed since he received such attention or shared such kindness.

Dashing his hands across his eyes to brush away the tears, he looked at the little group who had accompanied him to the dining room, that they might visit and partake together, while he ate his supper, dinner and breakfast all at once.

“I am thankful to you, Mr. Seely, for what you have told me,” he said; “no one has ever shown me before *how* I could overcome my sinful weakness. I have resolved hundreds of times to drink no more. I have signed pledges, taken oaths, been imprisoned and fined; my wife and children have plead and borne with me; they have deprived themselves of food and clothing to pay my fines and get me released from jail. After each and all attempts to keep me back I would feel myself drawn with a power I could not resist; into the saloon I would go; then days and weeks of debauchery would follow. It is horrible to me as I recall it—loathesome to you as I relate it. I was in despair! Tonight, however, you have given me new light and hope. If God will save me, I will serve Him! For the wrongs I have done my family I will spend the rest of my days in toil and care for them.”

It was past the midnight hour when they arose from the table and all knelt together; each of the family offered a brief, earnest prayer for the husband and father, to which Walter

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added a petition to which Mr. Skains added, in tearful supplication, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Angels in heaven must have rejoiced that night, as did that little company around the poor penitent, as they heard his simple prayer offered in an agony of earnestness.

Side by side he and Walter slept in the same bed, in the little bedroom, between snow white sheets on a bed as soft as down—heirloom to Mrs. Skains from her mother, which had often been pawned by her husband for drink, unknown to her, until its absence was discovered, only to be redeemed by the hard earnings of herself and her children.

Walter slipped his hand under Mr. Skain's arm, fearing his demon appetite might arise and drag him away before morning.

On first awaking at early dawn, Mr. Skains seemed dazed, as he cast his eyes about the room. No barred doors nor windows! No sheriff nor policeman near! His form did not ache as he had so often experienced when awaking on the pavement or cold, damp ground.

"Where am I?" he exclaimed, half audibly. Then recalling the events of the previous evening and seeing the young minister by his side, his pent up feelings of gratitude found expression in copious tears and words of thankfulness and joy. After his emotions had subsided he and Walter arose, and, after completing their toilets, joined the family in their cozy parlor, then all passed out to the dining room.

After breakfast and devotions, Mr. Skains said to his son, Willis: "My son, I will not remain and be a burden and expense to you. I will go at once and seek work. Can you suggest some place I would be likely to obtain it?"

Knowing his father's reputation in that part of the city, he said: "I do not know where you could obtain employment unless it be in the lumber yard!"

"Well, then, I will go there and inquire!" said his father.

"I will go with you, Mr. Skains," said Walter, partly to intercede for him with the lumber dealer, whom he knew—he and the church officers having purchased lumber of him for the new church begun under Walter's direction—but chiefly because he

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feared to let him go alone past the dozen or more saloons he would have to pass in going to the lumber yard.

It was well he went with him, for as they passed one and another of them the sounds and odors that came out—even at that early hour—caused Mr. Skains a convulsive shudder, as if struggling against a powerful inclination to go in.

“Oh, Mr. Seely!” he exclaimed, “how can a man reform when these places are open night and day to tempt him to fall again?”

“With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible,” Walter replied, and added: “But for His grace and help I might also be such as you have been. Now I loathe and dread those places as a I do a den of thieves or a nest of rattlesnakes; the beverages poured out in these saloons I fear as I would poison.”

“Do you suppose I can ever feel that way?” said Mr. Skains, “or must I still feel this consuming thirst and depend on God to keep me from yielding to it?”

“You have only to surrender yourself—soul and body—to Him and wait the results,” was the reply.

Having carried his dinner with him—which his wife had carefully prepared, Mr. Skains—who obtained the employment desired—did not return home until evening. To escape the saloons and his old associates he went some miles through the outskirts of the place to reach home in safety.

That night he appeared at church with his family, just as Walter began the services. People wondered as they saw his changed appearance—reclad, smoothly shaved, hair combed back from his high, broad forehead, on which rested, however, a shadow of remorse and fear.

Walter did not see him again to converse with him until the next evening.

How changed his appearance and expression of countenance as he entered the church with his family! The shadow had gone from his brow; his eyes—no longer dull and listless—were beaming with joy and happiness. During the singing he engaged heartily, although his voice was trembling and broken.

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He listened attentively to the sermon, while beside him sat his wife, calm and happy; his sons and daughter frequently glanced toward him, with proud confidence and hope—glad to have a true father at last whom they could respect and trust.

When the sermon was ended and different persons had offered prayer, he arose and asked the privilege of relating his remarkable experience.

“Many of you,” he said, “have known me perhaps in the years that are gone. What you have known was no credit to me. My family have known me, only to their sorrow. God has known me, however, better than all others. While He has justly condemned me, He has pitied and saved me. Not knowing where I was going I entered this room a few nights ago to warm my benumbed body after a day of drunken sleep in a cold barn.

“For thirty years I have been a slave to drink. I had given up in despair, to die a drunkard. Here I heard words that gave me one faint, new hope. I have experienced their truth and effects in the forgiveness of God and the renewed kindness of my wife and children. I felt the power of the Spirit of God enter me today. I felt I would rather die than go back to drink again. When the day’s labor was over I knelt down to pray—shut away among the lumber piles from everybody—resolved never to rise unless delivered from my appetite.

“I prayed for mercy and mercy was shown me. I asked for a new life and it came—a thrill of joy went through my being. I was as one ‘raised from the dead.’ I loathed my former self as though it had been a putrid corpse. Rising to my feet, I hastened home to tell my family—I came not around the outskirts of the town and through the fields as yesterday and the day before, to escape the saloons and their temptations, but passed them all. I had no more desire to enter one than I would a cesspool to drink or bathe. My appetite for strong drink was gone. Had the contents of every cask and barrel and bottle been poured out before me, I felt I could have waded through it all and not touch my tongue to it. I feel safe and my home is happy.”

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Many eyes were dimmed with tears of joy; many hearts were raised in praise and prayerful invocation in his behalf.

“Beloved, what hath God wrought?” said Walter, after which the meeting was dismissed.

“It must seem like a new life and a new love to you,” Walter said to Mrs. Skains some months afterward when he was returning from church and Sunday school with her and her husband. “I trust it will not make your husband vain if I tell him he appears to be growing young and handsome.”

“I cannot speak for my outward appearance, Mr. Seely,” said Mr. Skains, interrupting his wife’s joyful expression of gratitude; “but I know I am renewed within; God bless you for telling me how it could be done,” he added, as he grasped Walter warmly by the hand.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOPE DEFERRED.

Walter Seely's excessive labors imposed upon him the need of rest; this he sought in a visit to the homes of Rosamond and his father.

It seemed like former days indeed, to sit with the two families again united for an evening under the parental roof.

Age was streaking his father's hair and beard with gray. Martin was grown to be a strong and industrious youth.

Other persons and things showed but little appearance of change, save that Clarence Farnsworth wore an expression of weariness as from toil too excessive for his constitution; there was also somewhat that look one feels when sensing a loss of manliness in spirit and conduct. When at Rosamond's house Walter observed that she often sighed and placed her hand upon her heart.

Knowing the furrows upon her brow and cheeks were not made there by the plowshare of time, he took occasion—when they were alone—to inquire as to the real extent of her trouble. His gravest fears were more than confirmed; his recent experience with John Skains, however—in his conversion and reformation—had given him strong encouragement to hope a similar change would come to Clarence, and a happiness like that of Mrs. Skains would come to Rosamond.

“Clarence does not drink himself into a drunken stupor, nor does he abuse me or the children by personal violence,” she said to Walter, “but his coldness and neglect toward me and the children are grieving me to death. If I or any of my friends counsel or censure him about his habits he becomes morose and resentful; if we remain silent he thinks we feel a dislike or contempt for him. I fear he has not long to live; I cannot think of his going away from me or dying in disgrace.

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“I thought when I plead for father’s consent to marry him, my influence would save him and I could help him fulfill the promise he made to abstain from drinking intoxicants. I do not love him less than I did then, but the hope I then enjoyed has almost given way to despair, because he despairs of himself and will make no more promises; he says he cannot keep them. I know not what to do”—interrupted just then by the cry of her infant—only a few weeks old—she arose and went to the bedroom, returning in a few minutes bringing the babe with her.

“I have long felt a deep solicitude for you, Rosamond,” said her brother. “I have at times felt indignant toward Clarence when I surmised he was the cause of your care worn expression and loss of happiness; but I entertain no such feelings now. I am pleased to know you are disposed to befriend him to the end; it may be we can save him, if only at the last, and he may yet reform and lead years of sober, upright life.”

Walter then told her of Mr. Skains and the blessed change that came to him and his family.

“Are you ever in want of the necessities of life for yourself and children?” he inquired of her.

“No,” she replied, “for father and Edward are very kind to us. The farm and garden ought to furnish us a good living—with the milk and poultry we have—but we are in debt at the different stores which greatly worries me. However, it is not want that I fear, nor poverty I dread, but the disgrace that will rest on my children and the tendency to inherit appetite; then to be forsaken or treated coldly by my friends—because I and my children have an intemperate husband and father—is very painful to me.”

Unable to control her feelings, as she contemplated the sad picture of her present life and probable future, she wept, until her tears fell upon the face of her sleeping babe on her arms.

“Could Clarence be persuaded to sign the pledge—though I have not the confidence in that means of reforming drinking men I once had—or could he be persuaded to attend church and become a Christian, I should then have hopes for him,” said Walter, after having witnessed, in silence for a few moments,

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his sister's weeping. "Clarence is not so far gone, Rosamond, as some whom I have seen," he added. "One sad feature in his case, and quite discouraging, is his lack of love for his family; that being no fault of yours shows a selfish spirit and lack of principle in him; a man should feel his duty to his family one of his greatest obligations, and love and look to them as his best defenders, and his home as his safest retreat. His losing confidence in himself is sheer weakness and lack of decision; but he has considerable pride left—or fear—and tries to cover up his doings. He seems to have sufficient physical strength to prevent his being toppled over into the ditch every time he indulges his appetite. What he needs is more moral principle and strength of will."

"But how can he obtain them, Walter?" asked Rosamond, grasping, like a drowning person, at anything that would buoy up her sinking hopes.

"Just as Mr. Skains and many others have, my dear sister!

"By repentance toward God and faith in Jesus," Walter answered, and added: "Intemperance is a *sin*, long before it becomes a *disease*; the sin must be repented of before it can be forgiven and the disease cured. Clarence and thousands of others are today *bewailing* their *unfortunate condition*, who do not *repent* of their *wickedness* in drinking—asking God to pardon their sin in that respect."

"I wish I had more faith myself," said Rosamond; "I hardly dare call myself a Christian, although I do pray every day; I read and firmly believe the Bible."

"If anyone needs the help and consolations of religion, Rosamond, it is you and women who are situated as you are," Walter said to her. "I trust you may believe all God's precious promises; trust in His forgiveness and guiding care. Think of Aunt Carrie! How much she suffered, and yet, how serene and cheerful she is! She is truly a devoted Christian or she never could have endured her trials and been happy. I greatly miss the privilege of seeing her at this time. Won't you please tell me about her and the girls?"

"We wrote you about Uncle Joel's return from California,

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didn't we?" asked Rosamond, wiping the tears from her eyes, as Walter's request turned her thoughts into a new channel.

"I believe someone, writing from home, did mention the fact, but not the particulars," Walter replied.

"After being away twenty-seven years," said Rosamond, "he returned, an old, gray-haired man. He seemed to be temperate, but his wild western life had not refined his manners very much. He had plenty of money, he said, to take care of Aunt Carrie and the girls, and he insisted on their returning with him to California. He said he would not live here among his wife's rich relatives, from which we inferred he was not possessed of as much wealth as he pretended.

"We all regretted Aunt Carrie's going, she and the girls had become so much a part of our families."

"I hope they will enjoy their new home and Aunt Carrie's labors and trials be lighter," Walter remarked.

Looking at his watch, he added, "as I wish to preach in my church next Sunday I must leave you now, Rosamond, for I wish to remain at father's tonight, so he or one of the boys can take me to Lockwood in the morning in time for the early train; before I go shall I pray with you once more?" Suiting the action to the question, he knelt beside Rosamond's chair, while she sat with her face pressed down upon the cheek of the babe in her arms.

"Good bye, Rosamond," he said, when he arose to leave, and she turned her tear-stained face to receive his parting kiss.

"I am so glad you came, Walter," she said, calming herself. "Your words and your prayer have done me good; but oh, Walter," she exclaimed, after a moment's pause, during which tears again welled up in her eyes and rolled upon her cheeks, "I am sorry to have you go away; you only seem to understand my heart, or have any sympathy or hope for Clarence."

"But I shall come again, I trust," he said. "A brighter day may yet dawn for you and yours; remember always, Rosamond, in the darkest hour that is just before the dawn, there is a Friend who is ever near, 'Who sticketh closer than a brother.'"

Kissing her and her babe again, he hastened away.

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While passing down the street of Lockwood the next morning with his father, Walter observed the number of saloons that were open—some new ones having been added since he left home. Their inside operations were hidden from the passing public by screens and shaded glass. He wondered that public sentiment would allow them to increase or even exist. He resolved to return to his church and people and arouse them to protest against the wrongs the saloons were doing and demand that they be closed and the selling of intoxicating beverages be stopped in his parish. The following Sunday after his return he announced that the subject of the prayer meeting of the week would be “Temperance and Reform.”

When the evening came, he read numerous Scripture passages bearing upon the subject. The young people sang temperance hymns with zealous enthusiasm. The older men prayed long prayers for the removal of the curse of intemperance. The men who spoke expressed the “hope that *law* would be *enforced* and drunkards and law breakers be heavily fined.”

In the Sunday school the following Sabbath Walter said, “all who are in favor of the saloon raise your hands.” No hands were raised. He then said, “all who wish there were no saloons, and, if you could vote, would vote against them and all candidates who favor them, at the coming election for city officers, raise your hands.”

All the female portion of the school and the small boys raised their hands, also most of the young men did likewise. Several men who were either officers or teachers or belonged to the Bible class did not vote either way.

After the Sunday school was dismissed Walter overheard the superintendent saying, “I don’t believe in his dragging politics into the Sunday school. What do these women and children know about such things?”

In the evening Walter preached a sermon on “The Perils of the Times, and the Privileges and Duties of Christian Citizens.”

“The tendency of multitudes of young men and boys,” he said, in the course of his sermon—for these were ever uppermost in his mind—“is toward the centers of dissipation and corrup-

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tion. Hardly a form of personal or organized iniquity exists in this country but what centers and revolves around the saloons, as satellites around their central sun. To them our youth flock like moths to the candle.

"None approach them, however pure, but go away polluted. Once affected by their spell scarcely one can recover who continues to visit them. They are almost everywhere—in our beautiful suburb and in yonder great city. More saloons than churches; more drunkards than Christians. They supply tenants for our jails and prisons; paupers for our public almshouses and charitable institutions to care for.

"Is there no remedy? Is there no 'balm in Gilead?'

"Do I hear someone say, 'Yes, in moderation in drinking?' As well talk 'moderation' to the sweeping flames in a field of ripened wheat as to talk it to one whose whole being is one great Sahara of thirst for alcohol. Then, 'moderation in making and selling,' says another. As well talk 'moderation' to the tiger which has already the victim in his power and his fangs bathed in its blood, as to talk 'moderation' to those who make their gain by this awful traffic.

"Do you say, 'use moral suasion? Let mothers and wives and sisters and daughters plead with the erring!' Have not they plead and in vain? Could all the tears intemperance has wrung from loving, doting eyes be gathered up and poured into the mighty river that flows past your city, it would overflow its banks. Of what avail their tears? Arguments are not needed to convince one of what is already known or admitted. Advice is useless to those physically incapable or unwilling to follow it. What is needed as a remedy for intemperance is the removal of the cause.

"We have been trying to regulate the traffic in ardent spirits, but thus far 'regulation' has proved to be a protection—not of the weak slaves of appetite, but of the rich and strong, made so by the victims of their business. That which we seek to 'regulate' has become dictator, dictating to or defying those who seek to regulate it.

"This monster is hydra-headed and Argus-eyes; never found

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sleeping and not to be easily overcome or destroyed. But destroyed it must be. Regulate it we cannot. For its destruction then let women plead and children lisp their prayers. Let the law follow where the gospel has so long plead to unfeeling deafness.

“Let the Christian citizen—be he merchant or mechanic, legal advisor or practicing physician; be he rich or poor, exercise his privilege, doing his duty, by casting his ballot for men and measures whose sway shall be for the people’s good and not the people’s woe.”

Walter was quite astonished, as he descended from the pulpit, to be told by one of the church officers—a wealthy man—if he “persisted in preaching politics the congregation would decrease in numbers and his salary would fall short.”

He was greatly surprised at this suggestive warning, which, however, did not disturb him, but led him then and there to resolve to adopt the Scriptural, unsalaried plan of support, and *look to God alone* to provide, in His own way, the means to maintain him and his and the work given him to do.

He was amused to read in the Monday’s daily that “the unfledged pastor of one of our suburban churches so far forgot his place and his youth last evening, as to attempt to instruct his hearers in political economy and dictate to them their duty at the polls in the coming election. We were grieved to see the pulpit brought down to the level of the rostrum of the political stump speaker. While we admired his sincerity and zeal, we deplored his lack of discretion. His elocution was faultless—his metaphors original and forceful; still, we would advise him to ‘take some of the feathers from the wings of his imagination and place them in the tail of his judgment,’ that hereafter he may steer clear of attempting to use his pulpit in which to play the partisan role.”

Conversing with some of the most zealous workers in the church Walter was surprised when they expressed themselves as favoring the law that licensed men to make or sell intoxicating drink. He knew that many of them had sons who were becoming intemperate; some of them were in Fagan’s place the

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night he went, expecting to and did find several of the young men there.

"The revenue from license fees reduces our taxes," was the main reason given for favoring the license system. Walter knew that some of the men who had acted on that theory had paid more to keep their sons from jail after becoming intoxicated at the saloons than all their taxes amounted to.

He visited the voting places to learn how city elections were conducted, although too young himself to vote. Again he was surprised to see many leading citizens—some church members and some pastors of churches—vote for intemperate men; they walked side by side—arm in arm in some cases—with saloon keepers to vote the same ticket in favor of the saloon.

"Surely," he said to himself, "if these men are right, I am wrong and deserved the newspaper criticism, also the reproof of the church officer; but how can they do it consistently and pray for virtue and sobriety to prevail? How can God answer their prayers?"

He was greatly disturbed by these reflections, almost questioning, after all he saw and heard, whether ministers ought to mix up in politics or even vote if they could accomplish but little or nothing for the right.

For the time being he almost decided that should be his course, and he would confine himself to preaching the plain, simple gospel and doing what good he could. Then he asked himself, "if ministers and churches should not oppose the saloon, why do not statesmen, politicians and business men do something to put a stop to this evil that is growing every day in extent and power?"

Walter knew he did not hate the men who made or sold liquor, but their harmful business.

With one of them he became well acquainted—whose beautiful wife and children attended his Sunday school. Being especially invited, during a period of revival services he closed his saloon evenings and attended. Meeting Walter on the street one day he greeted him cordially. His face wore a serious expression.

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"I want to see you alone, Mr. Seely," he told him. Seated by themselves in a storeroom he said:

"My wife and I have attended your church several times of late. She wants to become a Christian and is urging me to do so. You know my business. By it I dress her like a lady. She has a gold watch and chain and lots of jewelry. We have Brussels carpets and upholstered furniture equal to anyone in town. I have just bought my little girl a piano for which I paid six hundred dollars. You have seen me riding with my family; you know what a fine horse and carriage I have. Do you think I could be a Christian and continue my business? While your church members do not patronize my bar, with but few exceptions they voted to grant me a license to sell liquor to other men. I can't see why one thing is any worse than the other. I would like to be a church member for my wife's sake. How can I consistently and follow my business, or how can I support my family, Mr. Seely, if I give it up?"

"I am very glad, Mr. Rose," said Walter, "that you and your wife are interested in religion. To be Christians we must love and obey God, and love and help our fellow men. If we love them, we will practice the 'Golden Rule.' Now, Mr. Rose, you have an elegantly furnished home, I know; but who are your customers and what is the condition of their homes? How do they dress and feed their families or furnish their houses?"

"That is what troubles me," Mr. Rose replied. "I tell some of them they should not spend their money for liquor and rob their families. They will have it though, and if I refuse to sell to them, they will go to Allen's or Fagan's or Schmidt's; that you know, is not business, Mr. Seely! We must keep all we have and get all we can if we get on in this world," he said, with a smile.

"But what about the world to come?" asked Walter. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" As to your business, the Bible says, 'woe to him that putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips; that maketh him drunken also, that he may look upon his shame.' Oh, Mr.

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Rose! I do want you to give up that business and become a good and happy Christian. God will bless and care for you and yours if you will serve Him; if not, I fear your business will prove a curse to you. Have you no trade?"

"Yes," he replied, "I am a first-class blacksmith, but I have lived an easy life so long I do not like to begin such hard work again; but I do feel I ought to change my way of living. I will think it over, Mr. Seely." So saying they separated. The next week he was induced to move to another city and opened a larger establishment. One of his children soon died. His partner won his wife's affections from him and eloped with her; within a few months he died of excessive drinking.

Another saloonkeeper and his wife attended Walter's meetings. They had once been Christians and were reclaimed after which the man immediately destroyed what liquor he had on hand and moved with his family onto a farm, where they were soon enjoying peace and prosperity.

As time passed, some things became more and more clear to Walter's mind; one was that if a man has the right principle he will not engage or continue in the manufacture or sale of ardent spirits. How to control or prevent such as have not right moral ideas or are untrue to what they do know, was to him, as it has been to many an older man, an unsolved problem.

Walter had also become satisfied that if a drunkard becomes once truly converted to God, as John Skains had been, he could and would abstain from drinking; the saloons would have no attractions for him. How to keep men from frequenting saloons and forming the habit of drinking; how to save those drunkards who would not become Christians greatly troubled him; he saw no salvation or hope for most of them, as long as the saloons were permitted to thrive.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DARKEST HOUR.

Walter received a letter from Martin, his youngest brother, stating he would visit him before returning to school to prepare for teaching.

The night after his arrival the brothers went into the city to hear a celebrated lecturer. They went to a hotel to lodge. Arriving at their room, Walter made many inquiries about those at home—more especially about Rosamond and Clarence. A year had passed since he had seen them and had the last conversation with his sister.

“We had excellent crops and good weather to harvest them. I worked for Clarence most of the summer,” Martin remarked, and added:

“Clarence has sustained several misfortunes of late. Before I began working for him the weeds got the start of him and the corn will suffer on account of it, as the haying and harvesting came on before the corn was ready to ‘turn over.’ The wheat became too ripe and much was lost in cutting and stacking. Clarence hired a young boy also; while riding his best horse after the cows, which were over by the white school house, she stumbled and fell, breaking her neck; she died on the spot. During the dry weather water became very scarce; while Clarence was turning the windlass to let the big earth bucket down to the man who was digging the well deeper, the handle slipped from his hands; before he could dodge away it came around, striking him in the face, cutting and bruising him so badly that he was laid up for ten days.”

“Poor fellow!” exclaimed Walter; “did ever a man have such misfortunes?”

“That was not all,” said Martin. “Some weeks after he recovered from his injury John Giddings came there, half intoxicated; he began abusing you.”

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"Abusing me!" said Walter, in surprise. "What have I done to him?"

"He accused you of stealing a bridle from him. Clarence denied your doing such a thing, whereupon John picked up a neck yoke lying by the wagon and struck him on the arm, also cutting his face so badly he was 'laid up' for several days. John Magorry had just come over from father's on an errand; he rushed up to John Giddings.

" 'Yees a dhirty spalpeen, yees are,' he said to him; 'w'ud yees be knockin' the brains out o' him, roight ferninst me oyes, and Rosamond an' the childers alookin' an' a cryin'? May the saints presairve us! By me sowl, oi'll'—crossing himself with one hand he grabbed the neck yoke away from John Giddings with the other; he was about to strike him with it when Clarence caught his hand, telling him not to hurt him. 'Thin oi'll haive him over the fince, Mishter Fairnswort,' said John. Turning to John Giddings he said, 'away wid yees, ye murtherin' spalpeen!' Seizing him by the collar he pushed and pulled him through the gate; he helped him rather roughly into his buggy, unhitched his horse and started him home, cursing and swearing."

"What did John Giddings mean by accusing me of stealing his bridle?" asked Walter.

"Do you remember," asked Martin, "that you borrowed a bridle of him when you and Carrol Frisbie rode to Plainwell on horseback to procure a boarding place, when you and he were arranging to attend college?"

"Yes, I do recall the incident, but that was most four years ago," answered Walter; "I supposed he got his bridle. Was it not taken home? You promised to return it for me."

"Well, yes and no," Martin replied, slightly embarrassed. "You left it at father's, as you had not time to return it after you came back from Plainwell before you went away again. I did not have an opportunity to carry it back to him until he came after it."

"Yes, yes; I understand," said Walter; "so he has been harping against me ever since and Clarence has had to suffer on

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account of it. That was too bad. It goes to prove also—in John Gidding's case—as with everyone else—that Christians—ministers in particular—should be very careful and punctual in fulfilling their promises, especially to irreligious people. But how did all of Clarence's misfortune affect him?"

"He became very much discouraged and spent more time than ever in Lockwood," Martin answered. "He would come home very late at night; the next day he and the team would hardly be fit to work. He is very heavily in debt; I understand Rosamond has put a mortgage on the farm father gave her to raise money to pay part of his debts. No doubt thinking he could make some money to pay the balance Clarence played cards and gambled in other ways in Lockwood. The 'sharpers' let him win a few times. To get money to gamble with he drew away load after load of grain and sold it, then went to the saloons with the proceeds of the sales and lost all, and what he had won before as well. He had not much else to sell to buy clothing and provisions this winter for the comfort of Rosamond and the children."

"Poor Rosamond!" said Walter, as the tears filled his eyes. "But," he added, "I know father and Edward will not permit her and the children to suffer. Could none of you prevent Clarence doing as he did, Martin?"

"No, Walter, we could not," he answered. "Rosamond would not leave him, nor would he leave her, although he often threatened to do so. Edward and I did sometimes go with him to town; he would slip away from us and we would find him in some saloon drinking and treating every one present. Clarence is very generous towards his false friends, but is very sparing toward his true ones."

"How deluding is strong drink!" said Walter, reflectively. "How it transforms a man into a beast and destroys all natural affections! Would he leave the saloon when you asked him to?" he inquired.

"Yes, generally," was the reply. "Once, however, when Edward went after him he refused to leave; as he was under the influence of liquor he abused Edward before all who were

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in the room; leaving him there Edward drove the team home, but Clarence did not return until the next day. Shortly after that occurrence I went over from father's to see how they were doing. Clarence had gone to Lockwood with a load of corn. I remained until after supper. He did not come home. Rosamond was feeling so sad, I decided to spend the evening with her and remain all night if he did not come before time to retire. We waited for him until after ten o'clock. As the children were all in bed fast asleep we decided to sit up no longer.

"Several times during the evening Rosamond went out upon the porch to listen for his coming—while looking toward Lockwood, where, through the darkness and cold, drizzling rain, she could see the faint glimmer of the lights in stores and houses.

"She appeared more and more troubled each time she came in; the tears were coursing down her cheeks faster than she could wipe them away. I felt deeply moved, but not knowing what to do I went to my room."

Martin remained silent for a short time, with a blended look of pity and indignation upon his face.

While Walter had been listening to the words of his brother the appearance of Rosamond, as Martin had pictured her, rose before his mind in contrast to her appearance years before, when she—a beautiful, bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, light-hearted girl of sixteen—he, a little boy, heard her say to Aunt Carrie:

"If I ever get married and my husband goes to saloons and gets hurt, I won't go near him."

"What did she finally do, Martin?" Walter asked, filled with anxious interest to know what became of Clarence at that time.

"I was awakened," he replied, "by a rap on my bedroom door. Rosamond asked if I would remain with the children while she went to Lockwood to find Clarence. It was two o'clock; I dressed and went down stairs. I noticed as I passed her bedroom door that Rosamond had been lying down, but the bed had not been opened. She had doubtless remained dressed to assist Clarence if he came. Seeing how anxious she felt, I went and harnessed and hitched a horse to the buggy.

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I told her I would go to Lockwood and find Clarence; if he would not come with me I would bring the team with me. Fearing I could not persuade him to come, she insisted on going; but I would not consent to her going alone at that hour, on such a night. Had Clarence driven his horses off a bridge, or from the road, or fallen from his wagon, she would be of small assistance. Just then her babe awoke and I thought she surely would give up the idea of going; but she soothed it to sleep again; having fixed the fire and extinguished the lamp light, she closed the bedroom door and actually risked leaving her three little ones alone and went with me to Lockwood in search of her husband. We scanned the roadsides and bridges by the light of our lantern to see if he had started home and stopped on the way or met with an accident. We reached Lockwood without discovering him or his horses. We drove to the livery barns to find the team and get trace of him if possible, but he had not been at either place. We then drove down the street, stopping before each of the saloons; a light could be seen in some of them, but all were quiet. Just as we were beginning to despair of finding him or the team, we passed a dark alley; a horse neighed long and loud; our horse answered it. Handing the reins to Rosamond as I stopped the horse I took the lantern and went down the narrow alley. There stood Clarence's best team and wagon, fastened to the corner of an old shed, the water dripping on the horses from the eaves of the main building. The lines were under the horses' feet. The posts and boards were gnawed and splintered as far as they could reach them with their teeth. They had evidently been there since noon; the ground where they stood was stamped into a thin mud several inches deep. A narrow stairway led from the shed up to a dark entry. Holding the lantern above my head I found the door. Walking softly, I approached it and listened. I heard voices and soon detected that of Clarence.

“Going back quietly the way I came I was about to unfasten the horses and drive them to a better place, when it occurred to me that the rattle of the wagon would attract the attention of the men upstairs; then Clarence would either come out and blame



"ROSAMOND"
"Four Score and Five Years"
(See Page 272)

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me, or suspecting someone had come after him, he would hide away. I knew how bitterly disappointed Rosamond would be not to find him. I therefore went directly to her and hitched the horse. She paid little attention to the team as she passed it. Following me up the stairs, into the entry, I knocked gently on the door, lest a louder rap would be taken for a policeman's knock; then the lights would be put out—the men scattering and getting out some other way.

“The key turned in the lock; the door was opened a few inches; I thrust my foot in, just in time to prevent the man shutting it, which he tried to do, when he saw Rosamond and me, instead of some of his customers, or some of the frequenters of the brothel attached to his saloon, as he supposed us to be at first. He asked me what I wanted. I told him—loud enough for those inside to hear:

“My sister, who is with me, wants her husband.”

“Who is her husband?” he asked.

“When I said, ‘he is Clarence Farnsworth,’ someone inside said, ‘Now, Farnsworth, you’ll get a tongue lashing; you’d better skip.’

“Hearing them shoving chairs about, I put my shoulder against the door—pushing both it and the man away from before me. I went in, with Rosamond just behind me.

“Clarence was staggering to his feet, to go out of another door; I stepped before him.

“‘Clarence,’ said Rosamond—taking him by the arm, hardly able to keep from crying—‘come, the children are at home alone; Martin will drive the team and you can ride with me in the buggy.’

“‘She’s got you, Farnsworth,’ said one of the men, as he gathered up the cards from the table and rolled up several bills which he took from a drawer; putting them in his pocket, he said, ‘I would like to see a woman lead me out that way, though! I’d horsewhip her when I got her home for coming in and spoiling a game.’ ”

Martin paused, then added, “I intended to bring the buggy whip with me when I went back after Rosamond, but I forgot

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it; it was well I did probably, for I was so angry when he said that, I should have cut him across the mouth with it and there would have been trouble. I was about to tell him what I thought of him when Rosamond looked me in the face and said, 'never mind, Martin, let us hurry home.'

"I followed her and Clarence out of the room; just before the door closed the same fellow, who took the cards and money from the table said, 'Well, she spoiled the game, and saved him his last five dollars; but I made a pretty good haul out of him; seventy-five dollars isn't bad pay for one night.'

"I heard another man say, 'she was very mild with him; *my* wife would make things hot if she found *me* here.'

"Clarence insisted on driving his own team; but, after considerable persuasion, we induced him to ride with Rosamond in the buggy.

"He did not go to Lockwood again for a week or more; but, Walter! there seems to be nothing to stop him if such a wife as Rosamond cannot keep him from it."

"Yes, Martin!" said Walter, with deep emotion, "there is One stronger than she or all of us together. He alone can prevent it and save him. Although Clarence is hundreds of miles away let us commit him to God in prayer."

Together the brothers knelt side by side. Walter prayed as he had never prayed for Clarence before; prayed God to *show him his sin and wickedness*; lead him to repentance and give him a new heart. An agony of desire made his body almost rigid while he prayed. His words were few, his voice low, but he prayed with his whole heart; the Divine Spirit helped him so that he offered an acceptable prayer. Suddenly the assurance that he was heard in heaven flooded his soul; the *agony* of desire passed instantly away; he was filled with peace; quickly rising to his feet, looking into his brother's astonished eyes, he said, "Clarence will be saved, Martin!"

"I hope he will be, for the sake of Rosamond and the children, as well as for his own," Martin remarked, not fully comprehending the grounds on which his brother's confidence rested. He returned to his home again, a few days later, and

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Walter resumed his pastoral duties. Whenever he thought of Rosamond, however, it was not with the troubled solicitude he had felt previous to the recent divine illumination he had experienced while praying for Clarence's conversion and reformation.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DAWN OF DAY.

An additional pleasure came to Walter in a visit from Claude Sharon a few weeks after that of Martin. After struggling long against poverty, Claude had, by earnest application, worked his way up until he was placed in his business life above or in charge of those who had enjoyed better advantages, but lacked Claude's perseverance and practical knowledge. This was bringing him what must have seemed a princely income compared with his earlier earnings, so that he might have lived in the lap of luxury had he chosen.

Just before going to visit Walter he had called on Rosamond and Clarence to receive the messages and tokens of love they wished him to convey from them.

"You will hardly believe it, Walter," Claude said, "when I tell you of the change in the character, personal conduct and home life of Clarence. He is no longer the sort of man you have known him to be for many years.

"About the time Martin visited you, Clarence was literally 'throwing himself away;' he was daily breaking your sister's heart. One night he came to church; a series of revival meetings were in progress. I was surprised, as were all who knew him. At first I thought he was in search of someone, or was there to see and hear, then would go to the saloon and ridicule what he had seen and heard, as almost everyone who frequents saloons and gambling places will do—make light of sacred things and religious people. During the sermon I saw him wiping his eyes, but I could hardly think he was weeping tears of repentance, although I thought he ought to shed a great many of them. But they *were* tears of remorse. When our present pastor, Mr. Parton, closed his sermon he asked all who wished to reform and be Christians to indicate it. Clarence rose and

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with trembling voice said, 'I am on the road to ruin; the end is not far away unless I stop now and here; I am very wicked; I am sorry for it and want God to forgive me, if there is mercy for me; I am very weak; I wish all good people to pray for me and help me.'

"He came again the following evening; Rosamond was with him; they have attended regularly ever since. Rosamond was more happy when I was visiting them than I ever saw her before, all on account of the great change and blessing that has come to Clarence. He reads a chapter in the Bible, then sings and prays morning and evening with his wife and children, besides saying grace at the table. He is very earnest in temperance work, and is making friends rapidly."

Walter listened as to something not unexpected, for had he not received an evidence from a Supernatural source that it would be so?

A letter from Rosamond confirmed all that Claude had said concerning the new life and joy that had come to her and her husband. Walter waited patiently until he could go to hear from their own lips the rehearsal of the experience.

"Thank God for His goodness and mercy; a brighter day *has* come to Rosamond!" he said, walking back and forth across the room, after Claude finished telling him about Clarence.

Turning to him again, he said: "Claude, what are your plans? We have counselled each other so long I feel quite free to inquire. How many heart to heart talks we had, how many pleasant hours we enjoyed when you used to visit me in the old farm house! I shall be glad to advise and help you further, if I can do so to your advantage."

"Walter!" Claud replied, "I have only one ambition in life, only one thing for which I desire to live; that is to enter the same field of usefulness in which you are engaged. I have reached a position which would supply all my earthly needs and make me wealthy, but I am not contented. When I was struggling against poverty I felt I should be perfectly happy in such a position as I am in now,—assisting the surveyors in locating streets and lots for property owners whose buildings were swept

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away in Chicago's great fire. But I would rather be poor and preach the gospel than pile up wealth."

"Well," said Walter, with a pleased expression on his countenance, "I am rejoiced to know you feel so inclined. Why not begin now, Claude? Next Sunday evening is the time for the monthly service and sermon I devote to young people. Why not make an address to them?"

"I am not prepared to do so," answered Claude. "I have no notes nor anything with me which I could use to their profit."

"Yes, you have, I am quite sure," said Walter; "you have time and the throne of grace; here is my Bible and book case. You can improve the time from now until then, using the means at hand; from these and your numerous prayer meeting talks and temperance addresses you can cull material which you can weave into a most instructive lesson, with a few touches of personal experience. What say you now?"

As he still hesitated, Walter said, laughingly, "the church officers meet Monday evening; if they do not—after hearing you—dismiss me and give you a 'call' they will at least gladly join me in recommending you to a church whose pastor is inquiring for an assistant. With him you can study the theory and practice of ministerial work, for a year or two—as you have learned so thoroughly and successfully your present business under the same method of instruction—then you can easily obtain a pastorate by yourself."

The next day Claude gave his consent and began following the plan suggested by Walter. A large congregation greeted him; the address—though brief—glowed with earnest pathos and sparkled with pungent points. At their official meeting the church officers recommended him and he was promptly engaged as an assistant to the pastor of a church not far from Walter's field of labor.

Claude's personal appearance was even more youthful than Walter's and engaged the interested presence and attention of young and old. His cheerful manner and tender sympathies made his ministry acceptable to all classes.

Silently, however, as the months went by, his unfaltering

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zeal wore away what strength a slow working disease had not consumed.

Called to take charge in another field of usefulness, ere he had served a year as an assistant, the additional care and responsibility of a pastor's duties terminated his young life—so full of promise.

To an early crown—graced with many stars—for souls won to the Saviour; to an early rest and reward—Claude Sharon passed, lamented by his people and mourned by Walter as but few mourn the loss of an own brother.

Another year of delightful, successful ministry had passed since Walter's last visit to his relatives. Many changes had occurred with them. In Rosamond's home the light of heavenly joy had begun to shine; he anticipated happy hours of spiritual communion there. How long he had waited and prayed for that!

Relatives could be no kinder than his had been to him; but the fellowship of souls, the communion of spirits touched with a heavenly affection is more tender than the ties of kinship. While not extinguishing natural affections, Christian love sanctifies and then envelopes them, as the sunlight swallows up the light of the stars, that shine at noon day as in midnight darkness.

Edward had recently married Jessie Spencer and they had settled on the farm west of the homestead which his father had transferred to him.

Thus new homes were being formed among his kindred and the circle awaiting Walter's visitation was enlarged. To him, however, the most important reason for accepting a leave of absence from his church—the event that was to have a marked influence upon his happiness and usefulness—was his marriage to Maud Wellington. The friendship, begun in the schoolroom, the brotherly and sisterly regard developed in the home circle and at the fireside, had slowly ripened—unthought of at first and almost unconsciously to themselves—into that fervid affection that makes two hearts one, and essential to each other's happiness.

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On his arrival in Chicago, Walter took occasion to visit his uncle's family, where—to his great delight—he found Aunt Carrie, who had recently returned from California on a visit. So unexpected was the meeting, for several minutes she failed to recognize in the bearded young man, the boy—Walter—of other days. The greeting—when recognition was established—was such as a doting mother might have given a long absent son.

The experiences of the years were passed quickly in review. Into her life had entered more of light and joy, which showed in her face and sung in her voice—than he had ever seen her display.

“Aunt Carrie,” said Walter, “what have been the principal causes of the happiness that seems to have come to crown your closing years?”

“I can hardly name all the causes, Walter, that have contributed to my happiness.” she replied.

“But,” she added, “all has not been joy since I left Lockwood. I do not wish to complain now, nor cast any unkind reflection upon your Uncle Joel's memory; but I soon learned, to my sorrow, after we had been but a few days on our journey that his western life had not modified his temper nor softened his heart.

“It was a disappointment to me when I drew from him the information that he had not the means to provide us a home of our own; but this was not so much a cause of grief to me as his austere bearing toward me and the girls. They were young ladies then, and were shocked and grieved by his conduct.

“The hardest thing to bear, however, was that which awaited us after our journey ended. The scenery en route was one ever-changing panorama, full of pleasure and instruction; but to be ushered into a bar-room the first thing and sit down among beer kegs and whiskey barrels, to be stared at by brutal, leering men and coarse women, was more than I could endure or allow the girls to suffer.”

“Was there no hotel?” asked Walter.

“That was the name given to that wretched place,” said Aunt Carrie—“where bar-room, parlor, office, were all in one; but the

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name did not change its character or condition—it was simply a saloon, with very inferior hotel attachments.

Before the sun went down, I had rented some rooms in a small cottage, in which to remain until such time as Joel could or would provide us a suitable home.

“For a time he added his earnings to what I received for needle work. We were comfortable and would have enjoyed life among the new, strange scenes; but, Walter! the saloon, which is there as here was the rock on which our domestic happiness split again. Joel, after having enjoyed the comforts of a home and the friendship of his family, rapidly changed for the better until he began again to drink an occasional glass of stimulants.

“It was soon learned that he had a deposit in the bank which we were saving toward purchasing a house. Every gambler and drunkard in town seemed determined to get it away from him; a few games, and his money was all gone; a few extra drinks, and his old appetite returned; forgetting promises, love and purity, he gave himself up to drink and idleness.

“I bore with him as I had formerly done. The girls protested, and my own heart and patience well nigh failed me; then he was laid upon a bed of lingering illness, from which he did not escape until death released him. I schooled my heart to pity him more and more, while he cursed the fate he could not endure patiently nor escape; he heaped his curses on me, as though I had been the cause of all his pain and trouble. Still I prayed for patience. It dawned upon me that thus should I see accomplished my long cherished wish that he might become a Christian and be saved before he died.

“The minister called; at first Joel treated him coldly—even repelled his friendly advances. Gradually he became more and more pleased with him, and eagerly waited for his daily visits.

“Friends multiplied and great kindness was shown us; but none who had helped rob him of his savings or lead him back to drinking called to see him or seemed to care or inquire about him.

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"I asked him one day where all his bar-room friends were?"

"What did he say, Aunt Carrie?" asked Walter.

"He made no reply," she answered, "but he looked steadily at me for a long time, as if in deep thought, as I sat by his bedside sewing. I saw the tears dropping silently upon his pillow. 'What is it, Joel?' I asked, as I laid down my sewing, and took his hand in mine.

"'Oh, Carrie! My poor, wronged, yet patient wife!' he began—but could say no more. For the first time in his life with me I saw him weep. The girls in the adjoining room heard his sobs and came where we were.

"He seemed as one who had awakened from a long sleep of horrible dreams, only to find they had been living realities, and he had not sensed the actual sorrow of a neglected home and broken hearts.

"'A lost life! Can God forgive the sin? Oh, my wife! My children! Can you, will you forgive me?' he exclaimed, as he saw us three standing by him.

"Just then the minister called again and talked with him. While he was praying, Joel prayed also, saying over and over, '*forgive, forgive, forgive;*' then suddenly—after a moment's silence—his voice changed; raising his arms and clasping his hands together, he said, '*lost, lost, lost, all lost;*' then, just as we were rising to our feet from kneeling in prayer, around his bed, he added, with a cry of joy, '*but saved at last.*'

"He asked us to sing and joined us, with a feeble, trembling voice. He continued thus the few remaining days he lived.

"They were days full of happiness, such as I had not seen since the time when I was first married, which continued until the accursed cup came in between us, and I discovered that human love alone was not enough to help him keep the promise to abstain, which he had made me. For those few parting hours I did not regret all I had suffered on Joel's account, if it was essential to his salvation. They sweetened all the bitter past; they will brighten my future days."

Never had Aunt Carrie seemed to Walter so grand and true as while she was pouring into his willing ears her heart's story

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and the record of events in her life since last he saw and conversed with her. Then he listened as to a counsellor; now as to a companion.

His cousins—Aunt Carrie's daughters—who had been his companions in infancy and youth, were married, and to them and their children she returned at the conclusion of her visit to friends in Lockwood—to spend the closing years of her life, surrounded with plenty and to enjoy that peace which only love and goodness give.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A DARK PICTURE.

Leaving Chicago, where he had met Aunt Carrie, Walter arrived at Lockwood just as the day's work was over; laboring men were pouring out of factory and shop and mill.

Through the car window—as the train stopped—he saw Rosamond standing on the platform.

Had she been raised from a bed of sickness and nourished back to ruddy health, the change could not have seemed more marked than that which he saw depicted on her face, in contrast with the appearance of hastened age she had worn so long—a look that gives ripeness and dignity to one of years, but mars early womanhood.

The picture of brow, eyes, cheeks and lips, now presented for one moment through the car window, recalled to Walter's mind the memory of his sister's happy expression on her wedding day.

A brother's partial eyes saw all this at a single glance and it made him gladly surprised. His astonishment, however, was fully as great when Clarence approached him with a frankness of manner, born of conscious uprightness—and grasped his hand to bid him welcome. He appeared as one who has nothing on even the most secret page of his daily life he would hide from public gaze. All that Claude Sharon had told about his changed appearance was plainly manifest; still more proofs were given, however, when, after tea the little ones had been put to rest, Walter sat with Rosamond and Clarence in the parlor of their farm home.

The door was open, and through it he saw the lights shining in Lockwood; then he turned his gaze toward the multitude of stars that gemmed the eastern sky that mild May night. As

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the gentle southern breeze came floating over Mr. Steele's orchard it seemed heavily charged and filled all the house with the perfume of apple blossoms and plum and cherry.

A whip-poor-will, hidden in the branches of the lone cottonwood in the meadow, was sounding his mournful refrain. A tree toad by the well curb, now and then gurgled forth a guttural trill. Occasionally the rattle of wheels and the thud of horses hoofs were heard, as some belated farmer hurried homeward.

Common words were, for a time, spoken about common things. Then Walter, addressing Clarence, said: "I noticed this evening as we drove from the depot there were scores of men, evidently returning home from work. Industries must be on the increase in Lockwood!"

"Yes, they are; but withal," said Clarence, "the place does not improve as one would expect."

"I noticed as we rode along the principal business streets," Walter remarked, "but few new blocks or stores have been built—many old ones are standing empty. Why is it so?"

"Well, it is a simple story, Walter," Clarence replied. "The profits of the manufacturing interests go into a few hands; although the money paid for labor amounts to large sums every month, and——"

"But," said Walter, "excuse me for interrupting you—I did not see many people in the stores or groceries trading. It would seem that so much money paid out monthly for labor would make all branches of trade lively; in addition, the farmers must have their share of merchandise, in exchange for their produce—but then, I suppose the farmers had gone home, and the mill and factory employees were hurrying home to their supper at that hour."

"You may be surprised at my question—but I see things through different eyes, Walter, than when you were here last," said Clarence, "but I want to ask if you noticed how many working men were going in and out of the saloons, and how many farmers teams were standing before their doors—some, no doubt, standing there yet? That, Walter, will explain why we

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have so many *stores* empty and slim patronage for those that are occupied."

"Yes, Clarence, I did notice those things," said Walter; "but how do you explain them? I have a theory of my own; but I want plenty of proof that I am right or else I wish to be proven wrong and abandon my theory."

"I do not theorize on the situation, Walter; what I am about to say, I speak from experience," said Clarence, as an expression of sadness passed over his face and he cast a look, full of pity, at Rosamond.

"When a man goes into a saloon for a glass of liquor of any kind at the close of the day—especially pay day—as those men did, he usually pays for five or ten glasses; instead of drinking one glassful he drinks several. He treats and must be treated. Many men go in intending to spend only five or ten cents, but before they come out they may have spent their day's or week's earnings; yes," he added, with a far away look in his eyes—"even the proceeds of a whole season's hard work. They have received nothing in exchange they can take home to their families, and have little or no money left with which they or their families can go elsewhere and buy what is needed ; the *stores and groceries are not crowded because the saloons are.*"

"Does not the money remain in the community and reach the merchants through the patronage of the saloon keepers?" inquired Walter.

"Only a small portion of it is thus expended in our stores and groceries," Clarence replied, and then asked: "What would the custom of several hundred families amount to if the saloons were closed and the money spent there was paid to the merchants in exchange for goods? It seems clear that but little of the money spent for drink goes to increase the bulk of trade on account of the patronage of a few saloon keepers and their families.

"The retail trade in liquor is for cash, because the law seems to say to a man when he pays for the privilege of selling, 'you must take your own chances of getting your pay for the liquor you sell,' hence, customers at the saloons are required by the

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proprietors to pay cash or an equivalent when they purchase intoxicating drinks.

“The merchants and grocers, if they sell goods on credit, can collect their bills by law, because it is allowed on all hands they have given an equivalent for the money paid or the price asked. Not so when liquor is sold to a consumer.

“But drinking men squander so much of what they earn, their credit is soon gone; becoming unfit to labor, their employment is uncertain, because unreliable, thus their custom becomes small and trade is made lighter. Some men, who do not spend all for drink or in treating, lose much in gambling. Almost every saloon has one or more men employed who are sharp, unprincipled persons, skilled in all the sleights and tricks of cards, dice, and all chance games. They know very well how to lose a few games—and let their opponents—if new in the business (?) of gambling—win and think they are on the road to fortune. They also know how to win a game—by fair means or foul—and get back all they have lost and more too.

“Young men are induced to play for sport at first; then for small wagers—cigars, light drinks and so on—gaining at first, afterwards losing. In order to regain what they lose they often forge their father’s names, embezzle from their employers, rob and even kill to obtain money to gamble with. That is what made Chauncy Harding—with whom you attended high school in Lockwood, Walter—and the young man from Chicago, break into Dr. Hartly’s drug store; being discovered, the young man was shot and killed while trying to escape; Chauncy was arrested, but was let off for his family’s sake.

“Farmers will haul their grain and other produce to market; then, having drawn the pay for it—pleased with the returns for the season’s work—they will often step into the saloon with someone usually on the lookout to invite them—to get a glass of beer. When they come to treat in turn—as is the custom—they display their money too freely—while paying their bill. Cash is not an every day commodity with many farmers, hence, when they have plenty, they are tempted to express their delight by showing it.

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“In a saloon they become the subjects for which gamblers are looking. If they can, they induce them to play some game; after an exciting experience in winning, they lose all—for that is the way it usually ends.”

Clarence's voice had in it a tone of remorse and indignation as he added the remark, “they go home beaten out of the fruits of their season's hard labor and not infrequently beaten in body, as bitter quarrels frequently occur over the game.

“If a man cannot be induced to gamble, often his drink is drugged; when he recovers from the effects he will often find himself in some strange place, dazed and penniless.

“A cattle dealer exposed his purse—containing a large sum of money—when he was paying for a drink of brandy; shortly after he called for another glass and drank it; he found himself a few days later in an empty freight car, in a strange city, hundreds of miles from home, without a dollar.”

“Can it be possible, Clarence, such things have happened in Lockwood?” asked Walter.

“Only too often,” he replied; “and such things did not *happen* merely; they were the results of deliberate planning. As I have already said, there are men whose business it is to do such things and the saloons are the places to plan or do them. Many of the men are well educated, fine looking men, but they do not scruple to rob a man if they cannot get his money any other way.”

“Why are they not arrested and punished?” asked Walter.

“You know,” Clarence replied, “that no man who has been beaten at his own game or in bad company likes to admit it. When men get drunk, therefore, and are kicked out of the saloons, or are injured, or lose their money there—no matter by what means—they are not inclined to expose their own wrongdoing by entering complaints against their associates. A few arrests have been made by parents or friends of the unfortunate. But, as the loser or sufferer was usually his own and only witness—and generally there were several on the other side, to swear they never saw him in the place, or that his accusations were not true—the jury would acquit or disagree and no one

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was punished. The same things occur again and again here as elsewhere.

"It is with shame I confess it, Walter! I have seen such things with my own eyes. I have lost money in such ways which my family needed, or that I owed for what I had already obtained at the stores and groceries on credit. I lost friends who were disposed to be kind to me; I wasted my time and health in dissipation; worse than all, I have caused Rosamond to suffer during the past few years that which no one but she can tell." His voice trembled while tears gathered in his eyes.

"Let us not talk about that, Clarence! that is all passed now," said Rosamond, who had been a silent but interested listener as he gave her and her brother a description—so startling and unknown to them—of the methods by which men and boys begin and continue a course of gambling and dissipation.

"Yes, it is passed, Rosamond!" said her husband, "and the marvel to me now is that I should have pursued such a wrong course so long."

"What led you to make a change, Clarence?" asked Walter, as he drew the large rocking chair across the room and sat down before the sofa, on which Rosamond and her husband were sitting.

"It is a long story," said Clarence, who after a short silence added: "I can hardly tell just what it was nor why; I had reached a point where I could not stop. I had lost my money and could get no more; my family were in need of many comforts; we have this house and farm, it is true, but they are heavily mortgaged and I could pay nothing on principal or interest. I felt no one cared for me nor could I justly blame them—I had ceased to care for anyone, and despaired of myself. I hated my own life, but did not dare to put an end to it—although often tempted to do so."

"Where were you when you decided to quit your wicked way of living?" asked Walter, eagerly.

"I was in Lockwood," he answered. "I took Martin to the early train the morning he started to visit you last winter. I was coming home from the depot when Sam Packard—whom

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you remember—saw me and asked me to stop. Telling him I must hurry home with some coal—for we were nearly out of fuel and a change in the weather was threatening, I started on. He urged me so strongly to step into Seely's billiard room and get a cigar, that I hitched my team and went with him."

"I feel disgraced every time I think of Seely's sign over the door that leads into his bar and billiard room," said Walter, interrupting Clarence. "His initial is the same as Edward's. When I get letters with his return address on the envelopes, or when I answer them, I am glad the postmaster and clerks, where I get my mail, are not acquainted here, or they would think I was corresponding very regularly with a saloon keeper. What do you think?" said he, laughingly, "only last Autumn I met a gentleman in Alden at a public gathering who, when I was introduced to him, began looking at me in a very quizzical way and said he knew my father very well, as he was frequently in Lockwood as a traveling man. Of course, as he said he had just come from here, I inquired about all of you; he seemed ignorant of your very existence; he did not know father owned a farm and was not acquainted with either of my brothers, whom 'father' (?) had not mentioned to him. Observing he was mistaken in some way, I asked him *where* he had so recently met my father. Coloring deeply, he reluctantly answered, 'I met him at his bar and in his billard room.' 'Not *much* did you meet *my* father at a bar or in a billiard room!' I said to him—measuring his morals and manhood by his answer.

"I further said to him, 'that man Seely is not my father, nor is his business that which my father approves, but condemns as strongly as I do.'"

"Well!" he replied, "I thought it very strange that a man in Seely's business would continue in it when he had a son who is a minister."

The three laughed heartily at this recital relative to their brother Edward's namesake, after which Walter asked Clarence more particularly about what occurred after he entered Seely's billiard room.

"Sam asked me to play a game of billiards," Clarence con-

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tinued, “but I told him I had no money with me. ‘Never mind,’ he answered, as he paid for the cigars and treated me to a couple of drinks. We played a number of games, by which time I began to feel the effects of the liquor I drank; I then proposed to play more if he would pay Seely’s bill against us when we got through playing, and would take my ‘due bill’ for what he won from me while playing. and I would pay him when I got some money. He consented to this, thinking—no doubt—I must have considerable grain and stock to sell, and would have plenty of money, which he would get from me as he had often done before; but I knew very well there was nothing in my purse, and no prospect of there being being very much for some time to come. Different persons came and went during the day.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RENEWED HEARTS AND A HAPPY HOME.

“Occasionally someone would take a hand in a game with us; before I was aware of it the sun had gone down; Seely had lowered the curtains to his windows and was lighting his lamps. I had wasted the whole day. My horses had stood where I left them in the cold, without blankets—for I intended to be gone but a few minutes when I left them.

“My head and brain seemed on fire from the drinks and the excitement. While I had won occasionally, I was a heavy loser. Sam had my due bills for a large amount payable on demand. Still we played on, without any supper, until after ten o’clock. We smoked and drank and played until long after midnight. Suddenly it seemed to me I was made to realize the awful thing I was doing. I threw the cards down upon the table, and said I was done playing cards. Sam remarked that he also was tired and sleepy and left the place, quite sober. I drove home, but such a drive I never made from Lockwood nor with such feelings! I could hardly manage the horses; they were cold and I was dizzy. I knew Rosamond would be up and looking for me. I had promised her and Martin both that morning I would return home and not go near a saloon—although I had refused for a long time to make such a promise—as I had done so—almost a thousand times it seemed—only to break my promise, when confronted with temptation. I dreaded to meet Rosamond, not through fear, but for shame. I cursed Sam, I cursed Seely. I stamped my feet; I took the whip and struck the horses a fearful blow; they plunged ahead in the darkness, nearly running off from a bridge. When they reached the top of the steep hill, this side of the river, I got control of them again. As they jogged along more slowly the rest of the way home, I asked myself, what shall I do? From bad to

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worse I am steadily going. By all I knew of what is good, I wished I could be better. I thought of my own mother; I thought of yours, Walter; I thought of you and what you said to me, when my little boy died; I wished I had died with him then."

They were all three weeping now, so Clarence could not proceed, nor could they listen; but their tears were tears of joy, not of sorrow and dread.

Walter now understood how God had heard and answered his prayer, which he was praying, while Clarence was gambling at the same small hours of the night, although they were hundreds of miles apart.

When all had become composed again, Walter asked: "How long, Clarence, before you experienced a change by which you realized you had received a new power within, by which you could do and have really done, what you so much wished to? I should also be glad to know how it came about," said Walter.

"I found Rosamond watching for me," Clarence replied; "so, after unhitching and stabling my hungry horses, I ate the lunch she had in readiness for me and went to bed, but not to sleep. I was haunted with an awful sense of fear, and yet it seemed as if something good was coming to me. Gathering up enough fuel about the place in the morning to last until my return, I went to Lockwood for the coal I failed to get the day before.

"At the coal yard 'Uncle Mitchell'—an old colored man, whom you probably remember—assisted me in loading; while we were putting the coal in the wagon he said to me: 'We's habin pow'ful' good meetin's at de meetin' house ebery night, Massa Fa'nswo'th; I'd be mighty glad to see yo' an' yo'r wife comin' to jine de meetin'. Brudder Parton's a mighty nice man; I t'inks a heap o' Brudder Parton, I do's, 'and he laughed heartily as he said it.

"I said to him, 'Uncle Mitchell! I am not good enough to come to church.'

" 'Yo' shor'ly ort' to come, to *git* good, Massa Fa'nswo'th,' he remarked. 'Jesus am pow'ful to sabe po' sinners, an' he

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lubs 'em all—de white sheeps an' de brack;' again he laughed and seemed so happy.

"I envied him his joy. I did not promise him I would come to the meeting, but on my way home, recalling his words about the black sheep—which he intended to apply to his own race and color—I applied them to myself—to my heart—for I felt it was blacker than his face.

"That evening I went back to Lockwood—not telling Rosamond what I went for; but really it was to attend the meeting. I put the horses in a barn—a thing I had not been in the habit of doing, but had left them out; at all hours and in all kinds of weather. The church was full; the singing was beautiful—I love music, but I could not sing that night, for the tears would flow and I could not prevent them—I did not want to. I was sorrowful as I thought of my past life and weeping seemed to do me good. I felt so weak and helpless, but Uncle Mitchell's words about 'Jesus' power to save sinners,' gave me hope. The sermon Mr. Parton preached seemed addressed wholly to me.

"I listened to the prayers by people whom I knew to be good citizens. In the saloons, however, I had often heard them ridiculed, religion made light of and ministers accused of everything bad. But there they were, praying for the drunkard and outcast; earnestly asking God also to forgive and cleanse every evil thought even from their hearts.

"Those with whom I had associated were wicked, not only in their thoughts, but in words and deeds; I never heard one of them confess his wrong, nor ask forgiveness of anyone.

"I resolved then and there I would exchange my associates and the bar-room for the church and such people as I heard singing and praying around me. When the meeting closed, I asked 'Uncle Mitchel' to come and see me the next day; I wanted to talk with him. When I reached home earlier than usual, Rosamond saw I was sober and had no smell of liquor on my breath; she was surprised—all the more so when I told her I had been to church."

"What did you think of that, Rosamond?" asked Walter, smiling.

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“I doubted it at first,” she replied; “but when I became convinced where he had been, I remembered what you told me—‘a brighter day will yet dawn,’ and I thought it might be near.”

“Dear ‘Uncle Mitchel’—the good old soul!” exclaimed Walter. “I heard him pray when I first began attending church; he prayed for me the night I was converted. Did he come over to see you, away out here, Clarence?” asked Walter.

“Yes,” Clarence replied; “although it turned very cold in the night—snowed and drifted in the road badly before morning. I concluded he would not come, so after breakfast I took the Bible and tried to read. The children seemed astonished to see me weeping while I read it. I guess Rosamond hardly realized what it meant,” he said, turning an inquiring glance toward his wife. “So many things I read brought back thoughts of the past! It seemed as if I was viewing my life and character, reflected in a mirror.

“While the storm was still very severe and exceedingly cold, I looked out of the window and saw ‘Uncle Mitchel’ plodding slowly through the drifts, while the wind blew the snow in his face. It flashed through my mind, how sincere that old man is! He certainly is a Christian or he would not have ventured over here such a day as this, simply because he thinks I am in trouble of mind and wants to help me, hoping I may become a Christian! I went out to meet him; he was too exhausted to speak until he had reached the house. After resting some minutes he said:

“ ‘I’s—mighty weak—an’ tired—an’ col’, Massa Fa’nswo’t—
but I’s—pow’ful glad—t’ see yo’. I’s bin prayin’ fo’ yo’—
all de way f’om Lockwood—I hope yo’ so’l is well dis yer
mo’nin.’

“I told him I felt far from well in my soul, but his coming would make me better.

“No! No! Massa Fa’nswo’t! I can’t make yo’ no bettah; Jesus am de only physici’n—fo’ sick hawts,” he said, very meekly.

“When we saw him coming, Rosamond put on the kettle to

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make him a cup of coffee and brought it to him just then. After he drank some of it and began to feel its warnt, he brightened up and said to Rosamond, 'Yo' is gwine to be a tru' d'ciple Missus Fa'nswo'th, an' yo' is gwine to git a d'ciple's rewa'd.'

" 'What makes you think so, "Uncle Mitchel," Rosamond asked.

" 'Yo' kno', he replied, 'de good book say yo' is gwine to git a d'ciple's rewa'd, ef yo' gibs the Lo'ds chile—an' I's one—ef yo' gibs him a cup o' col' watah, an' I spects dat means a cup o' hot coffee, jes' de same,' and he laughed as though his old body had not just recovered from being chilled to the bone."

"Well, he had a right to indulge in a little pious pleasantry," said Walter. "The only things his race had in slavery worth bringing out with them into a state of freedom were their prayers, good humor and songs. It is wonderful how—without learning in man's wisdom—many of them have become wise in the deep things of God."

"Yes," said Clarence, "and 'Uncle Mitchel' proved himself a wise teacher to me that day. His explanation of the Scriptures, as I read different passages, showed me my condition and duty very plainly and that, with his prayers, helped me toward a better life. The storm passed over, but he remained until evening, when he and Rosamond and I went to meeting together. I experienced a change of heart while there that evening. As near as I can describe it, the *sense* of guilt from my past life was removed from my mind and heart, like a dark cloud from before the sun. I felt the future appeared as when we look toward an unclouded sky. I have liked the church people from that hour. They have been very kind to us. Mr. Parton is a frequent visitor at our house. I see plainly now the wrong was in me and in those I associated with, or we never would have said what we did about Christians and ministers. I want to tell you one thing, Walter—if you have not already discovered it—true ministers are among the best friends of the drunkard and his family. Another thing I firmly believe is true—if the saloon is ever done away with, it will be chiefly through the influence of the pulpit, by agitating the ques-

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tion until the people's minds are enlightened and their consciences aroused."

"Your experience has done me good, Clarence; it has strengthened my faith; I shall remember it," said Walter. "Your ideas concerning the relation of ministers to the intemperate and the temperance reform are well worth considering, but it does sound strange to hear such words coming from your lips and out of your heart, as I believe they do; it is also very pleasing to think of you as belonging to a Christian church."

"It seemed strange to me at first—as strange as when I first heard you preach—I could hardly make myself believe it was you," Clarence remarked, pleasantly, and added, "I find happiness in Christian fellowship and service; I feel strong in the presence of temptations to which I once readily and helplessly yielded. My mind is occupied with thoughts of other things and I feel no inclination to my old ways."

"I should regard it as an insult for my old companions—knowing of my reformation and former life—were they to ask me to drink or gamble with them. No man is my friend or the friend of my family who would try to draw me back again. Was there no future reward I am being well paid each day in the peace of mind I enjoy and the happiness it affords me to see Rosamond happy once more—the furrows disappearing from her forehead and the color coming back to her cheeks."

"I have much to do and much to undo, but I hope by industry and economy to cancel my debts and have a home for myself and family in our old age."

As Walter listened to Clarence he was impressed with his sincerity and breathed an earnest prayer that he might have grace to always resist temptation and fulfill his purposes. He saw anew something in Rosamond's position and the happy expression on her face, that recalled a summer evening scene years before when, through the partly opened parlor door, he saw her and Clarence in the old home before marriage, sitting—as now—side by side on the sofa, hands clasped, while the light of love filled their hearts and illuminated their faces.

While they had been talking, the night had worn away; the

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day was dawning over the forests beyond Lockwood. Bowing together they prayed. Walter's voice led them in offering true thanksgiving to the merciful and Gracious One who heard and helped.

Wakening from a short sleep snatched from the early morning hours they gathered with the children at the family board, when Walter—for the first time—heard Clarence “say grace,” which Rosamond had said years before, she wished he might “some day find it in his heart to do.” Then, in the midst of his family—breakfast being over—Walter heard him read from the Word of God and thank the Infinite Father for mercies and blessings received and invoke His continued care.

As they arose from their devotions, Walter could but exclaim, Happy hearts! Happy home!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WORKING AND WAITING.

A few hours at his father's and Edward's for exchange of greetings, then Walter hastened to Plainwell to Mrs. Wellington's, where he had long felt he had a second home. He now came with a new and peculiar purpose.

It was an hour of mingled joy and sadness. Of joy to him and Maud Wellington, who were so soon to cross the threshold of her old home, to enter a new one—their own—together. Of sadness to Mrs. Wellington, the thought of which pressed heavily upon her feelings; but she would not suffer the shadows of loneliness that were to fall on her own heart to obscure the bright joys of those who were so dear to her. It was a happy group that assembled in her parlor that evening to witness the marriage service. The occasion was one void of display—conspicuous indeed for its Christian simplicity, both in toilets and testimonials—as became the contracting parties, in view of their holy calling. A short time was spent at Walters farm home.

A few days more and they reached the scenes where they together were to live, love and influence each other and those among whom Walter was to minister. Then—when a few months had passed—Mrs. Wellington joined them, to find a cordial welcome and a home. Called to another field at length, Walter found human needs the same, all satisfying qualities in the Divine provisions.

The greatest cause of wrong and suffering—the crying sin of all—that he discovered there, even more than in the former field of his ministry, was intemperance. A hundred saloons, open brothels and dens of infamy, poured out their vile odors and influences, drawing scores and hundred in, as to the vortex of a deadly maelstrom.

He united his voice with those in other pulpits. Stimulated

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by the recollection of Clarence Farnsworth's words, he raised it against personal indulgence in alcoholic beverages, and private or public endorsement of the traffic, by either individuals, municipalities, state or national governments.

Maud lent her time and influence in connection with the efforts of other Christian women to stem the tide, to rescue those who were being already borne down and prevent the young and innocent from plunging into the deadly stream. But, alas! Every saloon was as a trap door in a bridge across the surging torrent. In vain to man a lifeboat, thinking its work was done, when one or a few were rescued, for another and another and evermore, they were falling through and plunging down. Those who built the bridge and guarded it seemed indifferent, yea, many laughed at the struggles of those who went down and spurned them when they cried for help. In vain almost, seemed temperance societies, asylums, refuges, Sunday schools and churches established and maintained at great cost and labor!

Walter and Maud saw plainly that, while each agency was doing grand work and they, with others, rejoiced over the measure of success achieved, still all were dealing mainly with *effects* and were doing but little to *remove the great cause*.

As the years rolled on, with the zeal and wisdom of mature manhood, Walter continued to pray, preach and work, ever confronted with the awful curse of rum, the victims of which were to be found at every turn.

"Could you give me back my noble boy, who went out from me so pure and innocent, and now comes back—still only a youth, but a drunkard," said one mother to Walter, "I would gladly bare my right arm and let you cut it from my body." When he heard such sad wails from broken-hearted women—especially mothers—he ceased to mourn the blasted hopes that were buried in the grave with his first born, nor would he have called him back to earth and its temptations.

When his little daughter—image of her mother in miniature—climbed upon his knees, after his visitations to the homes of drunkards, to hear the recital of the woes and sorrows of their wives and children, he would clasp her to his heart, trembling

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as he thought of the mournful possibilities that awaited her. How could he endure the thought even of her womanhood being embittered one year or one hour, as Rosamond's and Aunt Carrie's had been, by their husband's slavery to drink—even though followed by days or years of happiness after reformation and redemption came?

With a deepening interest and sympathy for destitute and homeless children, especially those rendered such by the intemperate habits of their parents, Walter began planning how best to rescue them from their sad environments.

Seeing a small girl, poorly clad, sitting aloof from others at an evening service, he went to her at the close.

She told him her father was dead; she had no real home; her mother—addicted to drink—was often away or in prison. He called to see the little girl; after a long search he found her; her mother chanced to be present.

Resentful at first for his call, his kind words and interest in her child, led her to tell him her history. She had been married to a kind, industrious young man when fourteen years old; was the mother of the little girl when fifteen; was left a widow at sixteen; married again to a dissipated man when seventeen, who led her into his evil habits and company and then abandoned her and her child when she was eighteen; she was in turn abandoned by respectable people, with herself and child to support.

Walter moved her to tears, as he plead with her, in behalf of her child and for her own sake, to choose a better life. To his earnest pleadings her only answer was: "I can't; bad people pull me down; good people won't help me up."

Enough of real "motherhood" was left in her, however, to lead her to consent to a full surrender of her daughter—then ten years of age—to the care of Walter and his wife, who took her into their own home, to share its love and comforts with their own child, a girl of her own age. Under the influence of her new environment the poor waif soon blossomed into a refined and conscientious child, and was soon "planted" in the church and Sunday school. To the care of a refined child

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less home she was finally transferred and grew to splendid womanhood—to adorn at length a home of her own.

Thus Walter began and added to his other activities a child rescue work, that changed the course of hundreds of little ones, and bridged the chasm over which the *homeless children* passed to the care and comforts of *childless homes*.

The cost of this additional work Walter found was amply provided for, by his unsalaried plan adopted years before, by steadfast trust in the “Father of the fatherless.”

Occasional visits and correspondence kept Walter informed concerning the changes occurring at the home and among the friends of his boyhood. Not without a pang did he learn that his father had disposed of the homestead, after having achieved his desires concerning his children, by seeing them settled in homes of their own, which largely his paternal foresight had aided them in procuring.

A commodious abode in Plainwell—amply fitted to the generous hospitality they were accustomed to extend to relatives and friends—became the home to which Mr. Seely and his wife moved when they sold their farm.

The quiet streets, the pleasant homes, the intelligence and morality of the people, attracted them no more than the sobriety that prevailed in this “no license” town.

Not a saloon exhaled its vile odors into his nostrils as Mr. Seely walked the business streets. No reeling, maudlin wrecks met him at every turn, to cause him and other men to step aside and women and children to turn and flee.

No starred policeman at every corner, as if to *protect* the criminal makers and wreckers of human happiness, while doing their awful work, then to seize the criminals or drunken imbeciles and drag them to prison, to be maintained at public expense or fined, to enrich the public treasury, while their families become the wards of public charity or private philanthropy.

For these reasons chiefly, Mr. Seely decided to locate in Plainwell rather than in Lockwood or Juliet. It was with great satisfaction to Walter and his family that his father and mother now accepted an invitation to make them a visit. Even their

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prattling child awaited with eagerness the coming of her grandparents, whom she had not seen, but of whom she had often heard.

This first visit of his father to him in his own home was an experience that filled Walter with a new delight.

He did not at first recognize as his father the aged retired farmer coming through the crowd, which alighted from the train or was standing on the platform to welcome friends.

Increasing age and recent illness had whitened Mr. Seely's hair and thinned his features.

The motherly face of Mrs. Seely was a benediction to behold. The change and daily recreations that followed were of great benefit in renewing Mr. Seely's energies. Long rambles through the woods, or boating and fishing together, recalled to Walter's mind the former times, when his father would take him and his brothers on nutting excursions, or from the banks of the river that flowed past Lockwood he would bait a hook or drop a line with them, always causing them to feel a fine string of bass or pickerel was sure to be caught if he was present to try his skill.

"The same old charm, as I live!" exclaimed Walter, as he saw his father draw one shining fish after another from the water of the clear lake, to which he had persuaded him to accompany him. Pleased with their success on this special occasion, they retraced their steps homeward.

When they reached the city and walked down the streets their fine string of fish attracted the attention and inquiring remarks of the bystanders whom they passed.

Observing the number of saloons along the streets, Mr. Seely asked Walter how many there were in the city and the number of the population.

Walter replied, "there are one hundred places selling under regular licenses, and our population is twenty-five thousand."

"No doubt, the costs made to the city, by crime and pauperism caused by the large amount of liquor consumed, must be very great," suggested Mr. Seely.

"They are, sir!" Walter replied; "seventeen thousand dollars a

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year, besides about as much is saved the city by private charity; while the sight of so much distress and want makes some people hard and indifferent, it moves the sympathies of others and stirs their generous impulses.

“In giving you the figures I did, I have done so after a careful inquiry of the proper authorities, from whom I am certain I obtained the facts, though the figures contradict the theory of those who gave them to me; they favor licensing saloons and were elected on that issue. Many seem to shut their eyes to every other view of the question, while thinking of the revenue the license fees bring into the treasury of the city.”

“It seems to me men are blinded and labor under a sad delusion,” remarked Mr. Seely, “who think it is profitable to raise public revenues in that way. You know, Walter, I have made no public profession of religion, nor subscribed to any church rules or creed, yet my innate sense of right makes it seem to me immoral and inhuman to fill the public coffers at the expense of the public peace and safety or by causing the health and happiness of a large portion of the community to be destroyed.

“It is mean and niggardly to accept or resort to such a method to escape personal taxation for the public benefit and cowardly and weak to say a public wrong cannot be stopped in an order-loving community such as this city seems capable of being.

“I presume I notice the state of things here more because there are no saloons in Plainwell. The expense fund is raised by direct taxation, almost entirely; we are all glad to have it so. We think it economical, as well as more safe and humane than the method of depending on money obtained from licensing saloons and running the risks they would entail upon us. Our public expense account is not heavy in porportion to our population. Having nothing to produce disorder, we need no expensive police force; our jail is nearly always empty. Most of our laboring men have each a horse or cow, pigs and poultry. They purchase a large amount of grain from the farmers in the surrounding country to feed their animals and fowls.”

“That would indicate,” said Walter, “that the farmers would

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be benefited by stopping the manufacture and sale of beer and all intoxicating beverages derived from grain."

"Certainly," his father remarked; "for the man who spends his money for drink does not consume a tithe of the grain—if used to prepare the beverages consumed which he and his family would use as food. He would also be able to procure more and better quality of vegetables, fruits, groceries, dry goods, furniture, by being temperate; thus all classes of trade would be benefited, as well as the farmers."

"Why do not business men and politicians see these facts, father, and act upon them in their own interest, if for no other reason?" asked Walter.

Remembering that Maud had asked him to order some groceries, he requested his father to enter one of the leading business places with him. Just ahead of them, a man—slightly intoxicated—came out of a saloon door and staggered into the grocery which they were about to enter.

After much pleading for a few articles on credit, the grocery-man reluctantly accommodated him, exacting a promise from the man that he would pay that and other accounts very soon.

"A few such customers as that would ruin any man's business," the merchant remarked to Walter, in the hearing of Mr. Seely.

"Why do you trust him if he cannot pay you?" asked Walter.

"Because I feel sorry for his family," was the reply, to which was added the remark, "he could pay his grocery bills if he would let whiskey alone."

"Can he get whiskey on credit?" asked Walter.

"Not a drop," the merchant answered; "saloon keepers know too well they cannot collect their bill by law, so they demand cash, and such men as the one who just left here, will have liquor if their families have to go without food or fuel. They spend their earnings for drink and ask credit for the necessities of life."

"Have you very large amounts charged on your books to such men?" asked Walter.

"Yes; over five thousand dollars, which is ten per cent of the

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value of my entire investment in stock and fixtures," was the answer; "that represents also the bulk of my profits for the past two years, so that practically I have given my earnings to the saloon keepers during that time through their customers."

"Did you not vote for 'license' at the last election?" asked Walter. "It seems to me you business men are standing in your own light—acting against your own interests and the prosperity of the city—by voting that ticket."

"Oh, well!" said the man—somewhat confused—"our party leaders favor the license system, to hold every vote possible, as the vote runs very close between the leading parties in the city; then it lessens our taxes, by adding the license fees to the city revenues."

"I cannot remain longer to discuss this matter with you now," Walter remarked, "but," said he to the groceryman, "I would like to ask you a question or two before I go."

"If the saloons were abolished and the manufacture of alcoholic beverages was prohibited, would not such drinking men as have accounts on your books become sober, industrious men; pay their bills, accumulate property, pay taxes, thus reducing yours and leaving you the profits from your business to pay your own, increase your stock or otherwise invest it?"

As he and his father turned to pass out upon the street, they observed a peculiar expression upon the merchant's face which provoked a smile among the clerks who had overheard the conversation.

"Well, my son!" said Mr. Seely, laughing, "you wound that man up rather tight; I shall not be surprised to hear of his voting right and becoming a better citizen hereafter."

"Oh! he is regarded as one of our best citizens now, father," said Walter; "only he appears to have a wrong view of the relation of the saloon to business prosperity and is too much bound to a license party to suit you or me. He is an ex-soldier and was loyal to the country all through the war and has stood by the old flag ever since."

"Well, my son!" remarked Mr. Seely, "many business men and politicians do see the importance of having something

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done to break the power of the liquor traffic. Ever since the 'War of the Rebellion,' when sectional feeling was strong and bitter, party spirit has run high, politicians have controlled matters for personal or party ends to that degree they seem to have lost sight of real patriotism and the public good, and have connived to obtain the 'whiskey vote' to keep or regain power and place."

"Are there not, think you, more good men in this country than there are bad men? Are there not more who condemn this state of things than there are who sanction and practice it?" inquired Walter.

"No doubt there are, my son!" said Mr. Seely; "but they are not united; their interest is general in its character; it is intermixed with personal, party and business affairs, so that their temperance sentiments accomplish but little good for the public at large. I think, however, the time will yet come—and before many years—when all who love sobriety and good order, rising in their convictions and determinations above all personal interests or preferences, will unite to support such measures and such men as will put an end to the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits for drinking purposes."

Having arrived at the parsonage, they entered and found one of the leading pastors of the city waiting Walter's return, that he might consult him relative to certain matters on which the two had been appointed a committee by the "Pastor's Union."

At the conclusion of their interview Walter led his ministerial friend to the parlor and introduced him to his father, then excused himself to respond to Maud's call for some assistance about household matters. Left to themselves, they were soon engaged in a heated debate upon the topic which was uppermost at that moment in Mr. Seely's mind. He soon discovered and was shocked to learn that the minister held views so contrary to his own—views favorable to licensing saloons and in support of which he regularly cast his ballot.

When Mr. Seely declared to him that his "profession and his practice did not correspond," the minister said, with some warmth:

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"I believe in prohibition as much as you do."

"Pardon me, but I do not believe you," said Mr. Seely.

"Sir!" said the minister, with a show and tone of displeasure.

"That is what I mean," said Mr. Seely, firmly.

"With all due respect for your age and gray hairs, you can't insult me," said the minister, and rising to his feet, he added, "I repeat, sir, I am just as good a prohibitionist as you are."

"Indeed! Let us see if you are," said Mr. Seely; pointing down the street he asked, "do you see that building with the beer sign before it?"

"Certainly," said his listener; "it is a saloon."

"Correct," said Mr. Seely.

"Now, that saloon keeper is an intelligent man. He votes so as to protect his business—first, last and all the time. He believes in license, talks it, pays for it, and also *votes* for it. He votes the same party ticket you do. Now, sir, will you tell me just the difference between your vote and the rumseller's after they are in the ballot box?"

"I am not responsible for the fact that saloon keepers vote the same ticket I do," objected the minister.

"Ah! but you cannot crawl through that hole," said Mr. Seely, earnestly.

"You are responsible for the fact that you are voting the same ticket as that saloon keeper, when you know that the success of your ticket means, with absolute certainty, the continuation of this infernal traffic."

"You speak pretty plainly," remarked the minister, taking his seat again.

"Yes, sir! I mean to," Mr. Seely replied. "It is high time for someone to speak plainly to your class of men, who preach against the saloon, pray for the drunkard, but you vote with the saloon keeper for a party which you know to be for license. No man is better politically than his ballot. No amount of preaching, talk or protestation will discount your vote. In the eyes of the government, in the eyes of men and before God, you

Working and Waiting

are no better prohibitionist than the saloon keeper across the way."

"Now look here, my brother," said the clergyman persuasively, "let us not quarrel over this. We are both working for the same end, but we do not agree as to method."

"In talking as I do I am not angry," said the gray-haired speaker complacently. "I am simply telling you the cold truth, which you cannot deny. You talk about 'method!' Your method has been in practice for half a century, and the saloon, consumption of liquor, crime and pauperism have increased three times faster than the population of the country. Either quit voting for license, or stop repeating your false statement that you believe in prohibition."

"Well, upon my word! that is the plainest talk I ever heard," said the popular minister, glancing at Mr. Seely, then fastening his eyes upon the floor at his feet.

"All right; but tell me, is it the truth?" asked Mr. Seely.

The preacher paused a moment before answering, then said, slowly, quietly, but firmly, "Yes, it is, and may God bless you for your candor."

"Then, what are you going to do about it?" asked Mr. Seely.

"Do?" inquired the minister very frankly. "I can do but one thing—*vote* as you do, for prohibition."

Glancing at his watch he arose to go and meet another engagement.

"Give me your hand," said Mr. Seely, accompanying the minister to the door. "*Now, you are* as good a prohibitionist as I am."

Walter entered the room just after his friend had gone; as he sent a glance after him down the street he observed that his eyes were bent upon the walk just ahead of him, and nothing to the right or left attracted his attention from his deep thinking.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

REAPING THE HARVESTS.

Resuming the conversation that was interrupted as he and his father entered the house, Walter asked:

“How do you think the great ‘uprising’ you mentioned can be brought about?”

“In the first place,” his father replied, “the public mind must be enlightened, by spreading temperance literature among the people, and giving the plain, but scientific temperance instruction in our public schools.

“Ministers can do a vast amount of good by getting the right views and attitude themselves relative to the liquor traffic, and then arousing the people’s consciences. It begins to appear that women can exert a great influence, not only in the home, but in public also, by writing, public speaking and organizing themselves into temperance societies to agitate the subject.”

“They have just cause to complain and work against intemperance if any class has,” Walter remarked, and asked, “What do you think about their voting at elections?”

To this question, Mr. Seely replied:

“Women do not very generally desire the ballot, I conclude, from what I have read and heard; most of them think that voting is man’s duty; but if men will not make such a use of the ballot as will right this great wrong, I am in favor of granting women the right to vote. Surely they are as well qualified by nature as any man, and most of them are better informed as to the laws of our country and the duties of citizens, and perform those duties better—so far as they are permitted to—than many men who vote.

“I would have the young encouraged to sign the pledge of total abstinence; for, while I thought until a few years ago that

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I did not need the pledge to keep me sober, I have been glad that you signed it when you were young, Walter, and I rejoice when I see other boys do likewise. Although I am old, I have concluded that signing a pledge will do me no harm, nor curtail any needed liberties; it may encourage someone else, hence, I sign every total abstinence pledge that is presented, and I belong to several temperance societies."

Walter smiled, with a feeling of gratification, when his father imparted the last information; for, while he had often felt the power of his strict habits and sober example, since he banished intoxicants from his house and fields, he was pleased to know he was so interested and engaged in giving his influence and earnest efforts to advance the temperance reform.

"The pledge may do good to the young—as an educator and restraint to them—for such it was to me," Walter remarked, "but how will it be in the case of men who have an appetite formed and the temptation to drink ever staring them in the face? But for the saloons there would be but few temptations to the young to become intemperate; with the saloons, how can the great army of drinking men be kept sober if they were once rescued and reformed? If they sign the pledge, how many can or will keep it?"

"As I was about to add," Mr. Seely remarked, "let all educational influences be continued among young and old, and it will not be long until personal conviction and public sentiment will make the great majority of men determined and united. Laws will be enacted, persons will be elected to enforce them, that will put an end to the traffic. Then, instead of punishing the drunkard merely, while his family mourns and suffers, these will be saved and cared for; any man who will then presume to make men intemperate will be severely punished."

"It seems like a thing impossible of accomplishment, father!" said Walter. "The evil is so widespread and so intrenched in social life, in business, in politics—even in the churches—but," he added, after a pause, "I believe God pities the suffering ones now as He did the slaves before the war. To overthrow this evil is to help more suffering, sorrowing ones than did the

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fall of slavery. We certainly are on the side that is right, and,

“ ‘Right is might, as God is true,
Right, the day must win.’ ”

Dinner was announced, after which Walter said to his father: “You have told me how quiet and orderly Plainwell is, how is it in Lockwood? Is there any change for the better?”

“None,” was his father’s reply, as they arose from the table and went out to take seats on the piazza, leaving Maud and Mrs. Wellington to visit with Mrs. Seely, who was holding Walter’s little daughter in her arms while the dishes were being cleared from the table.

“No,” Mr. Seely added, “Lockwood is rum ruled, and rum ruined. Occasionally we see some of the effects of its condition and influence in Plainwell, when men who live there come home intoxicated, while others pass through on their return from market. It will be so with any temperance town surrounded by those that have open saloons.

“Lockwood is reaping the harvest of its own sowing; many, who favored a license system, have suffered the consequences in their own person or families. Doctor Leonard fell through strong drink. He, and many others, signed the pledge and formed a temperance society—as you remember—but they most all violated the pledge, and the society disbanded. The Doctor died, leaving his wife and daughters sad and desolate.

“Justin Boyd inherited his father’s fortune, but he became dissipated and died at thirty. Aaron Ridley took charge of his father’s business; but he has become a hard drinker; his hardware store is closed and he has gone into bankruptcy since his father died.”

“Too bad! too bad!” said Walter; “those boys were the favorites in all the school when I attended in Lockwood; but they have been ruined by drink, like many others of my early associates.

“It has been very different with my college chum—Carrol Frisbie—who, when he left the farm and college, located in

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Plainwell—and is now one your most prosperous merchants. What became of those hard drinkers who drove past our house so often, intoxicated, when I was a boy?”

“If you mean John Bunnell,” Mr. Seely replied, laughing, “his wife got the better of him two years ago. She wrote a pledge and compelled him to sign it; she seldom allows him to go to Lockwood, and never alone. John and the boys work the farm, and she attends to the marketing and money matters. They have repaired and repainted their barns, sheds and fences, and painted the house a bright color; the appearance of the place has completely changed, as well as the personal appearance of the family.

“Mart Eldred moved from the neighborhood, but is still a corpulent, red-faced beer drinker.

“John Giddings moved to Lockwood after selling his farm. He has been drinking harder than ever, and is a pitiful, repulsive object. His daughter—an only child—keeps house for him, denying herself all comforts and company that she may wait on him; she is a good girl, and worthy of a better home and father.”

“Well!” said Walter, with a sigh, “these sad tidings pain my heart exceedingly; but they are histories of other hearts and homes of which the land is full.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Seely, “and such experiences will be repeated until laws are *enacted* and *enforced* to remove the cause from the state and nation. I may not live to see it, but I believe you will, my son! I hope you will continue to preach against intemperance and the liquor traffic as you have done, and that ministers and church members will vote as they pray. I also sincerely hope you and your brothers will cast your ballots for total abstiners and prohibition principles.

“I have not many years of life before me; I feel, however, such happiness in working and associating with such Christians and ministers as are consistent and sincere workers, I would like to enjoy their company here and in the Saviour’s presence forever.

“I am glad to find you and your family well and happy in your own home. The portion of property I intended for you—not expended in your education—I am holding for you, as a

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part of your inheritance from my estate. You can do good with it, if you do not need it for yourself and family."

"Rosamond and Clarence are well and happy; their children are growing up and are well provided for. I am thankful Clarence became a Christian; it saved him from the ruin he was fast approaching.

"He has battled hard at times to resist temptation; those who dragged him down before, until all he had was gone, for a long time seemed determined, after his reformation, to get from him what he was saving.

"He has been industrious and frugal. From his salary, for he is now employed in the state institution at Juliet—in addition to the proceeds from the farm—he has paid off the mortgage on their property; so far as I know he is free from debt.

"He is a changed man; I only wish that all drinking men would obtain the same kind of religious experience he received, and all wives and children of intemperate men could become as happy as Rosamond and her children are."

Mr. Seely spoke with a tremulous voice, for his heart was filled with deep emotions. Walter could not prevent the tears falling from his own eyes; yet his heart was full of joy and gratitude that his father had risen above the doubts and questionings of his earlier years, and was resting in simple faith in that Saviour who had blessed him so richly and so often.

"The best part of our visit together," said Walter to him, "is to learn, from your own lips, that your last days are being your best. Clarence's reformation and Rosamond's joy are wonderful; they are, however, the privilege of all who are still as they were—sinful or sad. I know of no other means so thorough, or certain of obtaining their blessedness, but that through which theirs came.

"When you and mother return to them tomorrow bear my love and greetings to them and to each of our friends. Ever think of Maud and me—as trying—along with all who love mankind—to do what we can to save the fallen, while working and praying for the coming of a great reform and the achievement of CONSTITUTIONAL PROHIBITION IN STATE AND NATION."



SUNSET AND REST
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CHAPTER XXXV.

SUNSET AND REST.

An appeal was made to the young minister by some of his flock, that prayer be offered for one of their number whose approaching marriage had been postponed by illness, which the best physicians declared incurable. The request came as a surprising challenge to his knowledge and faith. His college instructors and older ministers had not indicated, by word or practice, that in these days “prayer” could be relied upon to heal the sick.

Their physicians had failed them and his sorrowing followers looked to him, as their teacher and guide in faith and practice, for hope and help. What could he do or say in this dire extremity?

So often during his brief Christian experience had he been confined to his Bible and prayer for understanding and guidance which led to the solution of many problems, so now, Walter turned to these two sources of help with a childlike simplicity and open-mindedness. He found many instances cited in the Bible where sickness had been cured in answer to prayer. Many promises were recorded, many injunctions given to encourage people to *pray* for health and life itself. Nowhere could he find those promises had been recalled or the injunctions cancelled, except on account of sin or unbelief—whatever might be thought, said or written in later times about the “days of miracles having passed.”

With such assurance, he notified the widely scattered friends of the young lady invalid—wherever they might be at the time—to unite, on a certain day and hour, in prayer for her. Several weeks passed before the joyful tidings came to him

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from the happy bride announcing her restoration to health and her marriage.

Parallel to this experience was the case of one of his aged church members, who, rapidly sinking through sickness and advanced years, desired a prayer service at her home. The physician forbade what he insisted, would hasten her death; this being unknown, however, to a few devout believers, they met at the invalid's bedside; during their prayers and songs of praise her strength returned to her and she joyfully united in their thanksgiving. When the physician called in the morning she cheerfully met him at the door.

Walter little realized that his newly acquired knowledge and faith in God's relation to human life and health, was to do more than prepare him for a wider range of helpfulness to those to whom he should minister in the future. While pursuing his arduous work—mistaking an overstrain for a well sustained vigor—he was suddenly stricken down with complicated physical disorders that put a complete stop to his ministry.

Among his most ardent friends and supporting church members were two skillful physicians. They volunteered their services promptly, which, out of deference to custom and the wishes of his family and congregation, were accepted.

Weeks and months passed into years with no relief from wakefulness and pain apparent—indeed the physicians admitted his case baffled their skill; pronouncing him incurable, they left him physically wrecked, just as he was approaching the time and opportunity for usefulness for which he had so hopefully and prayerfully prepared.

Marveling at his mistake and forgetfulness, he awoke as from a dream to the consciousness that, while he had counselled his people to put their case and confidence in the hands of the "Great Physician," he had neglected to do so for himself—trusting to human skill.

Humbled and penitent, with his Bible he shut himself up in prayer to the Divine Healer. He prayed for forgiveness; he asked for a submissive spirit—a *surrendered will*; he opened the Bible, he read its promises and asked for understanding and the

Sunset and Eest

spirit of cheerful obedience. For hours he waited in a silence, broken only by brief *worded* prayers or with unvoiced longings too deep for utterance.

Gradually one great desire and purpose pervaded his inmost being—to *submit all* to *Infinite Wisdom* and *Love*—to be cured or patiently suffer on through coming years—to live or die, self—family—life work—all—completely—as far as understood—all tearfully surrendered for Divine adjustment. He read: “Be *still* and *know* that I AM GOD.”

In the silent hours that followed he came to know God his Saviour as never before.

As the winter chill passes, when the warm, bright sunshine of springtime and summer comes; as the darkness of night and the dimness of a clouded day disappear, when the sun rises and shines, filling the world with light and splendor, so an unspeakable peace, light and joy filled the young minister’s whole being. Prayer gave place to the spirit of praise. Unvoiced thanksgiving filled his mind and heart. Leaving the secret place of prayer, he went out to look on familiar faces and surroundings; he spoke but few words.

Like softly spoken words of song, an inward Voice seemed to whisper to him these words:

“If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also *quicken your* mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Romans viii:2.

That evening, as his wife had been invited to accompany some friends to a church gathering, Walter, when it was time to retire, took their little girl to his room to sleep.

For the first time in over five years of wakeful nights he went to sleep naturally; after eight hours of slumber, as sweet and refreshing as that enjoyed by his child at his side, he awoke to a new day and a renewed bodily health.

In four weeks he entered the pulpit again and resumed his ministry—every disability removed, every organ and faculty of mind and body in healthful exercise.

While his friends rejoiced with him over his recovery, but few

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could comprehend the cause, or fully accept his explanation and teachings on the subject of Divine healing. To all such his simple counsel was "search the Scriptures;" "pray without ceasing;" live up to the light you have.

Giving due credit to surgery and the science of medicine, he recognized the liberty and necessity of those who had not "faith," to resort to and rely upon human agencies until—all these failing—in their "extremity" they—coming to the Great Healer—found it was the "opportunity" He was waiting for to help and heal them.

The years passed, and tidings came to Walter and his wife that Mrs. Wellington's visit to her former home in Plainwell—whither she had gone—was destined to be extended into a last sojourn. Maud hastened to her bedside and paid her last ministries to the one who had been her true friend and mother, ere she was laid to rest beside her beloved dead.

Ere long again the busy harvester entered Plainwell with drawn sickle, and Mrs. Seely's matronly form paled and wasted while, with resigned spirit, she sank into the last long sleep.

Bereft and alone again Mr. Seely sat in the solitude of his once pleasant home. His wish became a prayer not long unanswered that he, too, might be called away.

The first snows on his wife's resting place had but recently fallen, when Rosamond hastened from Lockwood to bring him from his home in Plainwell, and care of hired nurses to her own home and ministries. Bolstered with softest pillows in an easy carriage, he was borne along the highway, amid the scenes familiar for many years. Passing the old farm house—now possessed by strangers—Mr. Seely glanced through the carriage window; his feeble gaze swept over the broad acres—scenes of toilsome years. Fixing his tearful eyes upon the house and buildings, and leafless trees his hands had planted, he said, with deep emotion, "Goodbye, old farm and home! We part forever! Goodbye!"

Swift-winged telegrams summoned Edward, Walter and Martin from long distances in remote states to their father's sick bed. A few anxious days and wakeful nights of watching and

Sunset and Rest

the end drew near. To Walter, who sat beside him in the early morning hours, he said:

“My son! I am soon to leave you.”

“Father!” asked Walter, “how does Christ seem to you now?”

“Oh!” he replied, “whom could I look to, in whom but Him could I trust in an hour like this? Now, call your brothers and Rosamond and her family; I would see you all once more before I go.”

When assembled at his bedside they listened tearfully to his calm words of comfort and counsel.

“Live in peace and harmony, my children!” he said, at last. His fervent “Amen!” as Walter prayed for his peaceful passage out of life ended his prayers on earth, and soon his praise began in heaven.

His sun of life went down as the morning sunlight burst upon the world.

Old friends and neighbors, from near and far, assembled and followed, as his three sons and Clarence Farnsworth bore him and laid him down to his last long sleep by the side of the mother of his children.

A few more seasons came and went; again the shadows gathered around the home of Rosamond, no longer on the farm, but in Lockwood. This time it was Clarence—the ripened sheaf claimed by the grim harvester.

Feeling himself “a brand plucked from the burning,” he bore, as best he could, the pangs of suffering long drawn out; singing betimes, he prayed and waited for the welcomed coming of the end.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECTS.

Forty years have passed since the foregoing chapters were penned and now appear on the printed page.

New generations have risen to read their forecasts and note their fulfillment.

Most of those who were living actors and figured in the "Chronicles of a Farm House" have entered the Great Beyond.

Rosamond Seely—in her widowhood, surrounded by her sons and daughters, and childrens' children of four generations—has entered her four-score and five years, marvelously preserved and actively interested in current life.

Edward, having attained four-score years, found a respite from suffering and ended the battle of life by answering to the last "roll call" on Memorial Sunday and was laid to rest on Decoration Day. His grave was strewn with flowers as were those of millions of his sleeping comrades.

Walter and Maud Seely have carried into their "three-score years and ten," well preserved faculties, and unabated interest in all the religious, civic and social functions of the city where they live.

While no longer the "Mistress of a Manse," Maud's home is gladdened by the kindly ministrations of faithful daughters and the prattle of a grandson who seems to revive again in the minds and hearts of his doting grandparents the fond hopes and ardent expectations awakened by their first born and only son, who, like a bud that formed and faded in a day, came into their life and disappeared so soon, leaving the oft recurring thought, "what might he have been had he lived?"

Supplementary to these family joys, and stimulating to their vigor, is the continuous interest and frequent correspondence

Retrospect and Prospects

and intercourse with the hundreds of homeless or orphaned babes and older boys and girls—many grown to maturity—who, during the period under review, have come under their care or shared their home and oversight until transferred to childless homes for loving care and adoption. Many of them are building homes of their own and rearing their growing families.

In this beneficent work, Walter has found expression for his sympathy for destitute and homeless children, and his appreciation of what was done for his faithful wife and co-worker in her orphaned childhood.

Martin Seely, youngest of the family, in early life sought a home on the fertile fields beyond the Mississippi, where two generations pay him the tribute due for his years of toil in their behalf.

Among the great events of the past two-score of years, which will mean so much to the homes of the Nation, to Society, and the State, was—after a century of agitation—the triumph of “Woman’s Rights” and her enfranchisement by State and National Constitutional Provision.

But most wonderful of all—greater than has been the progress in inventions—automobiles, telephones, wireless telegraphy, air planes, electricity and its various appliances for light, heat and power—greater than all the implements for peaceful avocations or the horrible devices of a “worlds war”—gas, bombs, submarines—has been the emancipation of America from the “Rule of Rum.”

A Nation’s *conscience* has been aroused; business, the church, the state, the home, have united, and made our country FREE. Written in our hearts, adopted in our homes, fostered and taught in our schools, enforced in business, written into our State and National Constitutions, under a “Stainless Flag” floating over a United Nation, the decree is fixed that the brewery, the distillery, the open saloon, *shall never again curse American soil*—to break hearts, ruin homes, waste resources, corrupt the state, and hinder the work of the Church. Thus we have become a “Lighthouse” to warn and guide other peoples—tossed on a sea of booze—to the safe and peaceful harbor of sobriety and prohibition.

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The streets of Lockwood, Juliet, Chicago, like tens of thousands of other villages, towns and cities, seldom ever present the sight of drunken brawls nor drunkards reeling homeward or being led away to prison. Crime is being diminished; jails and prisons have fewer inmates.

True—many violators of the prohibition law are discovered.

The “Hooch still,” the “Blind pig” and “Smugglers” supply those who clandestinely seek to quench their lingering thirst, developed in the open saloon.

Adequate enforcement laws are being sustained by the highest courts in the land, backed by public sentiment; violators of Prohibition laws are brought to justice.

The Government has expended ten million dollars a year enforcing the law. To offset this outlay, it has received sixty million dollars from fines imposed on violators and property confiscated.

More and more shall the Farm Homes of America enjoy their rights, and supply “brain and brawn” for every enterprise and sustenance for our people. “Back to the Farm” shall men and women turn for truest freedom and prosperity. In a new and wider sense than ever, is America to become the granary of the nations, the Deliverer of the oppressed, a potent member of the councils of all people, the Almoner of Mankind.

HAIL! ALL HAIL, TO THE LEAGUE OF VOTERS FOR A DRY
WORLD.

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